

WRITERS VOICE



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Article

SLEEP ON IT

Jenny England
Isolated Writer

IT'S 3AM in the morning and I'm tossing and turning. I have new clean sheets on my bed, the fan is running creating white noise and cooling me down. I've been up, made a cup of tea, done some stretches and adjusted the blinds to block out small cracks of light creeping into my bedroom. But sleep: it's not happening. If there was a competition for the world's worst sleeper, I would definitely be a solid contender for a place in the finals.

So, when I was offered the tip to "sleep on it" in order to improve my writing, the first thing I thought was "in your dreams" (because I'm not having many).

However, despite the challenges I encounter each night to get the quality and quantity of sleep I desire, this tip has turned out to be one of the best ones I have ever been given, even though I can't remember who gave it to me.

According to Dictionary.com the idiom *sleep on it* was first recorded in 1519 in the state papers of King Henry VIII when he told his court he would "sleep and dream upon the matter" when considering an important decision. So like many such idioms it's been around for some time.

Although there would be no harm in taking the advice "sleep on it" literally by placing an unfinished manuscript under your pillow at night, the broader meaning (for the C16 as now) is to create some distance from your situation to reflect before making a decision (or in the case of writing to consider some aspect of your story or characters where you may be stuck before moving ahead). Writing requires more than putting the right words in the right order on a page. It requires a lot of thinking, planning and reflection. It doesn't work best if considered a kind of race, unless there is a deadline to meet in which case it is important to pace the work in order to allow for reflection.

It never ceases to amaze me how, after even a short nap something that hasn't been quite gelling in a story seems to come together almost effortlessly as it hadn't while conscious. However, there is more to the idea of *sleeping on it* than that. It is well acknowledged that sleep is a

The Inaugural Ernestine Hill Memorial Short Story Award Luncheon

will be held
immediately following the
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

on Saturday 4th May

– see pages 4 & 5.

Buy your
Luncheon tickets
online at fawnsw.org.au

mechanism by which your nervous system can be revitalized and any physical or emotional healing can be enhanced. What is less understood is the intriguing relationship between sleep and creativity. This is where we might first encounter the magical world of dreams: the complex, often other-worldly or bizarre visual sensations we experience at certain stages of sleep.

Dreams can be an amazing fertile source of inspiration for a writer. Those who experience vivid fascinating dreams might find it useful keeping a journal by the bed to jot down anything worth remembering from a dream. I'm sure dreams have been the inspiration for many well-known stories through the years.

It is well past 3am now and my thoughts are starting to get a little jumbled. I can feel my body trying to shut down—finally. So I decide to put this piece of writing away and get back to it after I feel more relaxed from an afternoon siesta later in the day. Or not.

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PLEASE USE THE 'CONTACT US' FORM AT
FAWSW.ORG.AU/CONTACT-US**

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QUARTERLY COPY DEADLINES:

15 MAY, 15 AUGUST, 15 NOVEMBER and 15 FEBRUARY
for June, September, December and March issues respectively.

FAW NSW Inc. State Council Delegates Meetings

The Executive Committee and Branch Delegates meet the first Saturday of **May and November** each year. Minutes are mailed to each Branch Secretary. Our **May State Meeting, 10am Saturday May 4, 2024**, is our **Annual General Meeting**, followed by the **Ernestine Hill Awards Luncheon**. See page 5 for details and ticketing.

General Membership and Subscriptions

Membership is open to anyone who has a love for writing—writers, whether amateur or professional—or anyone interested in promoting Australian literature.

AFFILIATION FEES – \$40 pa Full Membership (\$20 U21/Youth Rate)—due by 31 DEC. each year and paid to the Branch Treasurer where a member attends meetings. **Online banking preferred**, or cheques/money orders payable to Fellowship of Aust Writers.

Each Branch sets its own ANNUAL FEE from which the \$40 (or \$20 U21) affiliation fees are forwarded to FAW State Council for costs involved with printing and mailing *Writers Voice*, public liability insurance and administration.

PAYMENTS VIA ONLINE BANKING:

BSB: 082-936 Account: 172389833 Account name: Fellowship of Australian Writers. Please include your name as identification for payment.

ISOLATED WRITERS – \$40 pa (\$51 overseas, \$20 Youth U18)—see back page. Online banking preferred – **BSB 082-936, Account: 172389833**. If a cheque/money order is used, please make it payable to 'Fellowship of Aust Writers' and mail to **FAW State Treasurer, Rick Watkins, PO Box 690, Bowral NSW 2576**.

Writing Fellows

FAW Writing Fellows are listed here: fawnsw.org.au/membership/writing-fellows/.

The broad criteria for this class of membership, are that the applicant should have had a substantial body of work published and should normally have been a member of the FAW for at least two years. A committee of the State Council adjudicates on each application, which should be forwarded to the Registrar of Writing Fellows, FAW State Council, **4/11 Resort Road, KEW NSW 2439**. The application should:

a) include \$50 fee preferably paid online **BSB 082-936, Account 172389833**, receipt for which should accompany the application; or be accompanied by a \$50.00 cheque, payable to 'Fellowship of Aust. Writers', which should be forwarded to the Registrar of Writing c/- honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au or mailed to the KEW NSW address at left.

b) indicate the Branch where the applicant is currently a member and the number of years of FAW membership.

c) have attached a list of published, performed or broadcast works, with dates and details of publication. Also list any literary prizes awarded, although such works may be unpublished. Unpaid contributions to newspapers etc. and self-published works (unless widely sold and acclaimed) should not be included.

The one-time fee of \$50.00 will be used to cover costs of administration and cost of certificate. Excess funds will be used to further the work of the FAW. If the application is unsuccessful, the cheque will be returned, perhaps with a suggestion to re-submit an application when a greater body of work has been published.

Distinguished Service Award

This annual award recognises FAW members confidentially recommended by their Branch Committees and approved by the DSA Assessment Committee. DSA members will be honoured in the following way: successful candidates will be presented with certificates acknowledging their outstanding service at the Annual Awards Luncheon and in addition, a permanent Honour Roll in *Writers' Voice* lists the names of recipients, as well as on the website fawnsw.org.au/about-us/distinguished-service-awards/.

Guidelines for assessing recommendations for Distinguished Service Awards:

1. Recommendations must be the unanimous decision of a current Branch Committee.
2. Qualifications to include the following features:
 - (a) Length of service as a current financial member to be at least ten (10) years.
 - (b) Required to have a regular attendance record at Branch Meetings.
 - (c) Required to have participated in activities organised by the Branch Committee on a regular basis – or to have served on the Branch Committee – for at least eight years.
3. All recommendations to be submitted, preferably online, to the DSA Assessment Committee c/- honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au or mailed to **4/11 Resort Road, KEW NSW 2439** by 30 June each year.
4. A committee comprising the State President, the Vice President, the Secretary and the Treasurer will assess recommendations. The DSA Committee's decision is final.

ISBN

A FREE ISBN (one number per publication) is available to members—contact the FAW Hon. Secretary Jackie Laing honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au.

Public Fund

Donations of \$2.00 and over to this account are tax deductible. When there are sufficient funds, Branches may approach State Council for an amount for a specific purpose. Without donations FAW cannot grow and achieve this aim. When a member makes a donation, a note of his/her Branch is made.

FAW Manuscript Assessment Service

Critical reading with general criticism, editing including interpolation of articles, short stories and novels. A fee applies of \$50 (\$60 non-members) for a sample assessment of two chapters up to 7,000 words; \$25 (\$30 non-members) for one or two poems of no more than 60 lines each. To commence the manuscript assessment process please, **firstly**, contact the State Secretary honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au or phone 6559 5387 – **please do not forward your manuscript at this stage**. The Secretary will provide you with the contact details to enable you to forward the manuscript directly to the assessor.

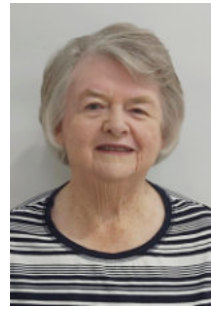
State Council News

From the desk of the State President

A WARM welcome to year 2024 everyone! It is only 4 short years to our 2028 Centenary. Yes short because the busier we are, the faster the months and years fly by. Some say it is as we age, but I think our age running out makes us busier to finish everything we start in less time.

I don't mean to sound morbid because I am not, for me it is a reality. When I came up onto the State committee from a Branch Committee, I had just reached the 'official seniors card' ranks. At sixty I felt young, free to write whatever I liked with the knowledge that I had plenty of time to publish my work. But here I am twenty years later, yes lots of my work published – in fact I received my Writing Fellow diploma in the Year 2000, but I have so much more not completed.

My grand plan for this year is to lead our Fellowship into an enlivened organisation which began with some unbelievable talent joining our State Committee ranks. I hope to introduce them to you as space becomes available and encourage their very best effort for us into the years ahead. They have all made an excellent start as you will soon learn as the months roll by. Let me assure you that without taking anything away from our



Colleen Parker

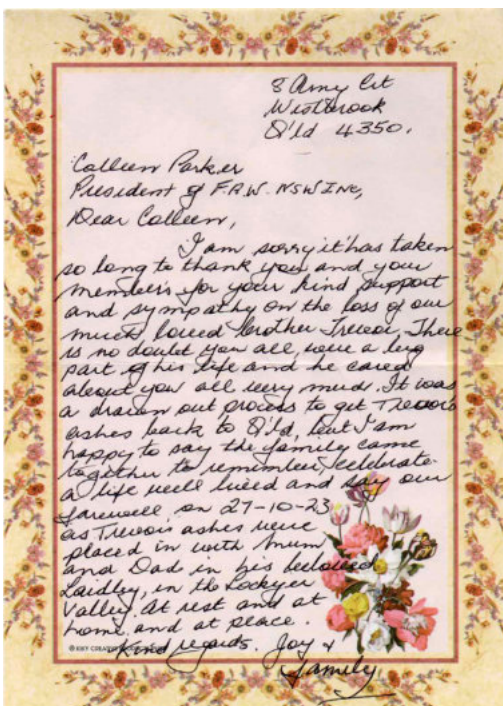
previous committees, who with me felt the pressure of the lack of support at times, we are fortunate to have enthusiastic, skilled, reliable members who have stepped up to look after us all for the next little while.

It is sad that it has taken the deaths of Trevar, Prof. Elizabeth Webby, Elaine Burton, Brian Armour et al; along with the retirement of Maureen Kelly oam to instigate a renewal, but that is the natural way. While we feel enormous gratitude to our predecessors we need to look beyond a centenary celebration in 2028 and soldier on. We writers are the sticky beaks of the world and without us our stories and poems will not be tangible evidence of the world during our era.

In this issue I am introducing our newest State Committee member, Kathryn Berryman who is a blood related member in the line descended from our inaugural Hon. Secretary, Marjorie Quinn 1928. We are both proud and fortunate to have her in our ranks. Welcome Kath [see P6].

Colleen

Letter from Trevar Langlands' sister



[TRANSCRIPTION]:

8 Amy Crt
WESTBROOK
QLD 4350

Colleen Parker
President of F.A.W. NSW Inc.

Dear Colleen,

I am sorry it has taken so long to thank you and your members for your kind support and sympathy on the loss of our much loved brother, Trevor. There is no doubt you all were a big part of his life and he cared about you all very much. It was a drawn out process to get Trevor's ashes back to Q'ld, but I am happy to say the family came together to remember, celebrate a life well lived and say our farewell on 27-10-23 as Trevor's ashes were placed in with Mum and Dad in his beloved Laidley, in the Lockyer Valley, at rest and at home, and at peace.

At rest and at home and at peace.

Kind regards,
Joy and Family.

State Council News

News From The Secretary's Desk

I HAD a sudden rush of blood to the head and when FAW needed a State Secretary I found myself nodding my head. So! to Quote Vincent Van Gough. I am always doing what I cannot do yet, in order to learn how to do it.

So now to news...

Our new assessor's name is Mel Ifield. Email manuscriptassessment@writeme.com

If you need some critiquing done, I am sure Mel will be happy to help you. You will find the fees incurred on Page 2 WV.

Seniors Card Short Stories

The proposal has been accepted for 2024. The Theme is **'What Made Me'**.

The competition opens for entries 21st April and closes 2nd June.

If you wish to attend a workshop, see details in this issue and on the FAW NSW website.

AGM and Luncheon

This event will be held on Saturday 4th May: AGM 9.30am, Lunch at 12pm.

VENUE: Royal Automobile Club of Australia, Circular Quay, in the Macquarie Room. The Ernestine Hill and Ray Cerhan 2023 results will be announced at the lunch.

We are going all out on this event and the price will be subsidised by FAW for all members. We look forward to seeing as many writers as possible attend [see opposite page]. It is always nice to catch up with like-minded people.

Handy Hint

Just a heads up, if you are looking for information regarding FAW you will find most of it on page 2 of the *Writers Voice*. Failing that you can try our website fawnsw.org.au.

Happy writing

Jackie Laing, Hon. Sec.

Letter to the editor

Thank You

I HAVE been totally overwhelmed by the number of messages I received from FAW members following my resignation as State Hon Secretary last October, thanking me for what I did whilst I held the position.

I wish to thank every one of you from the bottom of my heart for your kind thoughts.

I am now spending a lot of time enjoying writing/publishing success with my two great friends, Jill Baggett (Mudgee) and Narelle Noppert (Wollondilly) under our pen name *Issy Jinarmo*, as well as producing my South Australian independent living village's monthly magazine, Probus branch newsletter and being an active Creative Writing member of my local U3A.

My very best wishes to you all.

Maureen Kelly OAM

Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW Inc.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Saturday 4th May 2024

Time: 10.30am sharp

Venue: Macquarie Room,
Royal Automobile Club of Australia
89 Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW.
All members welcome.

Voting Rights:

State Committee and Delegates only. Please advise delegate name and branch on registration.

Agenda: Will be distributed by the Hon. Secretary per email.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Written nominations to be sent to Hon. Secretary by Friday 12 April 2024. Secretary hands to the Returning Officer (to be appointed at the meeting 4th May.)

State Committee Positions

All seven positions become available annually:

1. State President
2. Vice President
3. Hon. Secretary
4. Hon. Treasurer
5. Membership Registrar
6. Publicity Officer
7. Gen. Committee

Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW Inc.



Ernestine Hill Memorial Short Story Award Luncheon

The two new competitions are reaching their conclusion with the judges' Short List selection just about complete.

We are thrilled that with covid behind us, we announce the resurrection of our annual Luncheon and the format for the presentation of both the Ernestine Hill Memorial Award and

the Rae Alison Cerhan Australiana Ballad competition.

We encourage you to come along and join in the excitement as the results will be kept under wraps and announced at the luncheon.

- When:** 4th May 2024 **Time:** 12 noon to 3.00pm
Where: The Royal Automobile Club of Australia
Address: 89 Macquarie Street, Sydney
Room: Macquarie Room – There is an entrance from Macquarie Street and also an entrance from Circular Quay. From the railway station and ferry terminals level, walk towards the Opera House direction to a roundabout with the word 'Parking' there. Walk in the entrance to the elevator and Press the button for the Macquarie Room
- Meal:** Two course alternate drop – tea and coffee – Jugs of water
Drinks: Beer and Wine purchase on the day from \$10.00 per glass

Tickets online through www.fawns.org.au \$55.00 each

Limited numbers so purchase ASAP, partners and friends welcome.

- How to get there:** The Club is at the Circular Quay end of Sydney:
Access by: Train and Ferry
Road, Light Rail, buses, Taxi and Uber (near the Opera House)

Parking at the Club via booking – see phone number below

- NOTE:** For distance travellers and/or for anyone interested in looking for accommodation there are Rooms available onsite.
Please contact Royal Automobile Club of Australia direct. 02 8273 2300.

Meet your State Committee: Part 1

Introducing our newest State Committee Member – Kathryn Berryman.

Kath published a biography on Marjorie Quinn, **'THE YEARS THAT THE LOCUST HATH EATEN'** launched in December 2011.



Kath Berryman

From Kath Berryman...

THANK YOU to the State Committee, for inviting me to join our FAW General Committee. It is an honour to be asked, and I appreciate the gesture.

In July 2023, Colleen contacted me, regarding the upcoming centenary of the formation of our organisation in 2028 and the publishing of a book to mark this important milestone.

The centenary book plan is to encompass our history, growth, development, and the achievements of our members during its history. Branch beginnings, historical events, milestone moments, interesting anecdotal pieces of past members and high-profile people who have had connections with the FAW, will make a fascinating read.

A daunting project?

Yes, it will be a challenge but with the wealth of historical treasures, member knowledge and close collaboration between the Branches and the Working Group, this project will become a reality.

To keep everyone 'in the loop', the Working Group will send periodic emails to Branch Representatives with outlines as to 'where we are now' and a 'to do' list. This will help keep the lines of communication open in a manageable way.

The first email is scheduled to be sent after this issue of the *March Writers Voice*.

Exciting times!

Kath Berryman

I MET Kathy Berryman, through President, Trevar Langlands, who received an offer from her asking if the Fellowship of Australian Writers would be interested in looking at a long-lost manuscript that her family possessed which was written by Marjorie Quinn in circa 1966.

Kathy met with the Management Committee, stunning us with the treasure she displayed. The bulky, carbon-copied manuscript with a cardboard cover wrapped in calico and 'sewn' with safety pins was as exciting to behold as any artefact found in a dusty, tattered state anywhere in the world.

The relevance was that ***Dream At A Graveside*** (the history of the FAW compiled and edited by Len Fox), shows Marjorie Quinn as our inaugural Hon. Secretary in 1928.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported on 8th December, on the formation of our literary organisation, the Fellowship of Australian Writers. Among those deserving to be honoured as pioneers and founders are two writers, Mary Gilmore and Marjorie's uncle, Roderic Quinn.

Kathy and her sister, Deb McMahon, had the right to publish Marjorie's manuscript after obtaining copyright approval. Their mother and her family were first cousins to Marjorie Quinn and therefore also related closely to her father, PE (Patrick Edward) Quinn and his brother Roderic Quinn. The Quinn family's involvement in Australia's early literature had as their closest friends, Mary Gilmore, Miles Franklin, Norman Lindsay,

John le Gay Brereton, Steele Rudd, Henry Lawson, Walter Stone, in fact all the names that drop off our tongues, were real people with real lives in which Marjorie's Memoir shares with her readers.

Kathy's unique Memoir, ***The Years That The Locust Hath Eaten***, includes many anecdotes of the relationships between these writers and records the histories of their careers. As Marjorie never married, her personal effects were left to her cousin Noreen Quinn (Kath and Deb's aunt). After her death the sisters recognised the importance of what was nearly discarded to the trash, in the house clean-up.

Reading the manuscript gave rise to excitement and the fear that unless they found help to conserve the work it might be 'lost' forever. From the references in the manuscript about the Fellowship of Australian Writers, Kathy contacted Trevar, and the rest is history.

Kath published in December 2011, Trevar was MC and I, along with other excited FAW members attended the launch in the NSW State Library's Dixon Room. Marjorie's original manuscript has been lodged in the National Library in Canberra in 1967 without there being a 'published' edition.

I was so pleased to learn that Kath is still a current member so didn't hesitate in contacting her as being the most appropriate person to invite to Head up our Panel to produce our Centenary book.

Colleen Parker

FAW NSW State President

Branch Reports

BLUE MOUNTAINS FAW

LIVING IN the Blue Mountains seems to inspire us to aim higher. We reflected on the branch's many achievements at our 50th Anniversary celebration and anthology launch in September last year, which was an outstanding success leaving all our members feeling elated.

In October, Yvonne Wilson presented a warmup, 'Let's Get Visual.' A selection of awe-inspiring close-up photos encouraged us to focus on setting, and resulted in some great writing.

Still on a 'high' from our celebrations, we enjoyed photos and read messages from VIPs, FAW State Council and others. Another surprise was a 'Community Recognition Statement', from Trish Doyle MP, Member for Blue Mountains.

We also worked on our group's '10 Writing Commandments' which provoked enthusiastic discussion [see page 12].

Pat Allen, Rosemary Baldry and Yvonne Wilson, were presented with certificates acknowledging their 2023 *Seniors' Stories Volume 9* success.

In November, Annette Brown gave us a quick editing exercise. After reading a short story, we were encouraged to write a few paragraphs, then review it, to see if it reflected the core of our story. We then edited our work, to stay true to our core purpose. It was revealing to see how quickly we could improve our writing.

Rosemary Baldry discussed the topic of 'Furious Fiction Revisited', outlining the main features of very short story writing. We completed exercises to enhance our descriptions, by considering their relevance as metaphors to our story writing, adding extra dimensions.

Over a delicious lunch in December, we shared Christmas stories and enjoyed a chance to relax.

A few of us gathered for a casual meeting in January. We offered our thoughts on Pirie Klemmer's latest writing and discussed our goals for the year.

Thanks to Liz Agars for her warmup in February and to Deb Harris who gave a presentation on how to develop memorable characters, using a template to build personality traits which gave us fully fleshed out individuals.

Our greatest asset is our members, who each contribute in many ways, all with the shared goal of aiming higher.

Jeanette Temesvary

EUROBODALLA FAW

We've had a great start to the year, with a few new members who are keen to develop their writing through sharing their work and receiving detailed feedback. There are currently 26 members – 17 in the day group, 9 in the night group and 3 in both. Each group caters for different needs – the night group tending to share sections of large works and the day group, shorter works. But there is overlap.

In February two of our writers held book talks at local libraries about their recent books...

Judy Turner's *Watermelon Days* and Tracey Lee's *Welter* (the third in a trilogy, after *What Remains* and *Wither*).

We have some really interesting and clever poets in our group and have decided on a poetry workshop with Harry Laing from Braidwood this year. I did a workshop with him a number of years ago at the Batemans Bay Writers Festival. Harry's details can be found on his website.

Something else we have committed to is an Anthology, not having produced one for 9 years. (Where does the time go?!) And of course there will be our yearly *Literary and Art Salons*. The day group is also going to run an in-house workshop on Critiquing to help members who are reticent to participate in this process gain confidence.

Rosie Toth

FOREST FAW

2024 has started off well, with some wonderful early news for Seetha Dodd, who achieved second place in Jackie Hosking's annual competition for rhyming stories.

At our January meeting president Heleni Sutton kept our brains and pens very busy with exercises on writing emotion.

In February, author Felicity Pulman visited us with an informative and motivational workshop on writing Children's Stories.

March will see Margaret Zanardo present 'Writing Poetry from the Heart', an interactive workshop aimed at persuading writers of other genres to discover the joy of writing their own style of Poetry.

We are all looking forward to a creative, productive and successful year. Happy writing, everyone!

Margaret Zanardo

ISOLATED WRITERS

2024 has started off as a bad year with news of the passing of Brian Armour and Elaine Burton.

Brian Armour died peacefully at home in January 2024, aged 71 [see page 12].

Elaine Burton joined the FAW in 1980 and was later awarded with Life Membership.

That was after the shock of hearing Queen Margrethe II of

cont.next page...

Branch Reports

ISOLATED WRITERS

cont. from previous page

Denmark announcing her abdication during her New Year's Speech on New Year's Eve.

This brings me to another topic, I also found that AI (on Bing) is rather useless at times when trying to find out information about Queen Margrethe's visit to Australia in 1987, it claimed she had never visited our shores and cited *New Idea* as a source!

It was rather interesting that the media coverage was all about 'Our Mary' being 'crowned' – even though they don't do coronations in Denmark.

Never mind about Crown Prince Frederik who was the heir to the throne and proclaimed as King Frederik X on Sunday, 14 January after his mother abdicated.

At the moment, the **Electronic Round Robin** is currently on hold until we can find someone willing to take on the role of ERR Convenor.

I am very thankful to Brian, Vickie, Marilyn and Jim who helped provide valuable feedback through the ERR over several months with my yet-to-be-published novel.

The Seniors Card Short Story Competition will be running again this year for the tenth year, with the theme, 'What made me.'

After 12 years I am stepping down as Isolated Writers Convenor and will join the panel of readers for the Seniors Card Short Story Competition.

It has been difficult trying to juggle the role with working commitments, especially in those months leading up to Christmas.

I wish whoever steps into the role all the best for the future.

Carolyn Cash

LAKE MACQUARIE FAW

Under the pen name Cathrine Marshall, Cate Plink has published

the first of seven books in The Dancers series. *Jacinta in the Mirror* was officially released on 13th February 2024, but a pre-release launch was held at the National College of Dance Studios on 14th November.

Sadly, we farewelled Cate Plink from our committee. Cate has served the LMFaw tirelessly and now needs to focus primarily on her duties on the State FAW Committee (and her children's novels). Thankfully, we keep her as a member, and her position will be casually filled by Bronwyn MacRitchie.

At our December Christmas meeting, we wrapped up the year in a party atmosphere. Sumptuous food, gifts for each attendee in our 'Secret Santa' book exchange, door prizes with paintings donated by Pam Garfoot and Bronwyn MacRitchie, and music provided by John Franks on Clarinet and Bronwyn MacRitchie on Keyboard.

The year began with the birthday celebration of our founding member, Rina Robinson, who officially turned 100 on January 10. She celebrated with family, friends and fellow writers at Club Macquarie on January 12. Congratulations Rina!

The January social, held at George Graves' house, gave members not only a chance to relax and share holiday stories, but encouraged by Sandra Boyd, our president, to consider and record their writing goals for 2024.

In February, the theme 'What are you reading?' was an effective session on listening to what members are reading and the benefits we all received in a way that our writing is enhanced. Pam Garfoot shared statements from famous writers and reiterated that *writers read differently*. The writing exercise, using 'a book' as the

character, produced a variety of excellent prose from our members.

Bronwyn MacRitchie

LAMBING FLAT YOUNG FAW

The culmination of our 41st National Writing Competition occurred with the announcing of prize-winners at the National Cherry Festival held in Young on the first weekend in December. The number of entries received from all around Australia were slightly below 2022's. Entries from schools noticeably increased as did the number of participating schools. Judges noted an overall improvement in standards in entries from schools. This included in editing and quality from secondary students. Thanks go to all those in the group committed to the task of running the competition.

The group was taken aback by the unexpected resignation of our President in late November 2023. As a result our AGM was moved forward to the first scheduled meeting being February 2024. Our Christmas function was deferred to January.

We came together in January for the late Christmas gathering and held a planning meeting for the coming year. Attended by the majority of members, discussions and ideas flowed around the table. The group's goal this year is to write more; to share our writing; to focus on our work and what we are writing ourselves. A workshop will also be planned for September 2024.

We start 2024 with three new members and are looking forward to their contributions.

Wishing all other FAW groups good writing for the coming year.

Jennifer Haynes

MACARTHUR FAW

Our Christmas extravaganza, at Campbelltown Arts Centre, was the

pinnacle of parties. Obviously, our quiz made *Sale of the Century* look like a sorry mess. And naturally, our whirlwind of word game wizardry outshone the *Scrabble World Championships*. No doubt, our party was more unique than *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. If Lewis Carroll had been there, he would have agreed. Unfortunately, the séance yours truly conducted in the sculpture garden, to invite Mr Carrol along, was unsuccessful.

Lewis couldn't make it to our fabled Yuletide festival, but all the other big names were there, including: Macarthur FAW President and romance fiction writer Victoria Chie; our treasurer and aviation history buff Cathy Hobson; master of the fractured fairytale, the one and only Sussannah; ecology guru, Miriam Skerra; publicity officer and poet Rodney Hunter, aka TheSurrealArtPsychonaut; our hard working secretary, Kim Sami; long-time member and former secretary Pauline Twemlow; short story writer, poet and musician extraordinaire, Bernard Smith; and of course, the inimitable master of miscellany, Eric. Eric is like Sussannah and Beyonce, his second name isn't required.

The rumour that Victoria Chie, our illustrious president, summited the ginormous piano tuning forks in the sculpture garden, after consuming one too many coffees, is completely unfounded. Victoria doesn't need caffeine to perform that sort of stunt.

In other late 2023 news, Miriam completed a workshop with Authors Publish Canada. This involved writing a poem a day for an entire month. Yours truly, Rodney Hunter, aka SurrealArtPsychonaut, triumphed in our conservation story competition. Lantana Mountain, his ecological tour de farce, I mean

force, was more unpredictable than any *Twilight Zone* episode. Fast forwarding to Macarthur FAW's January meeting now, the return of Dina, the newest member of our legendary literary cult, gladdened our hearts.

We're anticipating a truly miractastic and funtacular 2024.

Rodney Hunter

MUDGE VALLEY WRITERS

Our President, Marilyn, was pleased to welcome two new members, Julie and Gudi, to our group this year. Our new format of meeting in our homes is working well, with Connie being the current hostess and treating us to a two-part workshop on Memoir Writing.

Bob has a busy time with his Poetry Circle and is preparing for his music and poetry concert at Gulgong Opera House as part of the Henry Lawson weekend. He has also found time to write a full-length play.

Jill and Pamela presented the *Seniors Stories* workshops at Wellington and Kandos this year so we are all keeping busy and enjoying our writing adventures.

Jill Baggett

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS FAW

An enthusiastic group of our members attended the Port Macquarie Sunrise Campus Markets on the first Sunday in December to promote our group and showcase and sell our writing achievements. Priority was given to the sale of *Painting Stories* together with other publications by our Group including our *Showcase 2023* and *Senses* stories. Emma Gaulton also displayed her first novel *Our Tom* and Faye Owen's book of faith poems *Is Anyone There* was also

featured. It was a successful morning both in connecting with the public and also the sale of books.

We plan to attend a further Sunrise Campus Market on Sunday 7 April 2024 to attract new members.

Early in December our group gathered for our Christmas Party at the Abundance Cafe, a pleasant venue between Port Macquarie and Wauchope. This was also an opportunity to farewell our long-standing member and now State President, Colleen Parker, acknowledging her enthusiasm and contributions over a period of 17 years. An engraved wall clock was presented to Colleen to remind her of her time with us. To Colleen and Doug, we wish them well for their future endeavours in Sydney and to Colleen for her continued commitment to the FAW.

We also congratulate Jackie Laing as she undertakes the role of State Secretary.

2024 Calendars were planned during our January meeting. We have allocated two months to 'Back to Basics' based on *Unlock the Writer Within*.

Our writing skills and imaginations are put to the test each month with a subject chosen
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Port Macquarie Sunrise Campus Markets bookstall. L-R: Walter van Hoorn, Colleen Parker and Brian Tolagson.

Branch Reports

PORT MACQUARIE

cont. from previous page

for a short story or poem. Many of our efforts are published in *Writers Voice*. Each member presents their story or poem at the next meeting, which proves to be a very entertaining exercise.

We wish all FAW members a year of inspiration and achievement.

Alison Davey

REVESBY WRITERS FAW

Our first February meeting on the 3rd of February 2024 commenced at our usual time 1.00 pm at the Revesby Workers Club venue which we use, the Macarthur Room, Dixon Lane, Revesby.

Our previous President Simon Kaddissi, due to other commitments, resigned from his position, but will still attend our meetings whenever possible.

Our new President, who was our Treasurer, is John P. Coyne; Barbara Hutchins is now the Treasurer. Shirley Galloway will continue as Secretary/Publicity Officer. All the 11 attending writers put their hands up in agreement. We had five apologies from our other members who sadly could not make it to our first meeting of this year.

Our theme motto, which Simon Kaddissi suggested at the end of last year, is 'Abundant Writing.' We continue with it, trying to write every day, beginning early in the morning if possible.

We have nine topics chosen for our monthly meetings, and some of our members stick to the topics. Others choose to write what they wish to do. Everything is accepted – as long as we keep writing!

We want to thank Maureen Kelly for her support throughout the years that she has worked as Hon. Secretary, plus her other positions she has held. We would also like to

thank Colleen Parker, now the State President, Jackie Laing and Ken Driver for all their support throughout their years, plus all the other Committee Members for their work concerning the *Writers Voice* and the running of the F.A.W.

The resigning president challenged the Revesby Writers to question why they attended the group. Ultimately, this is a writing group, so it is hoped that some writing will take place and improve; however, this is a social group always and encourages the union of like minds. At the end of the day, writers write.

Shirley Galloway

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS FAW

2023 was a busy year, so it was lovely to relax and enjoy the December meeting which involved 18 presentations by members and of course a wonderful Christmas spread. The reading of poetry, prose, short stories, memoirs and a play entertained us and added to the festive mood. Paula and Rhonda added a percussion sound scape while presenting one of Rick's poems.

Membership of around 30 will probably stay much the same in 2024. We are however still receiving two to three membership enquiries each month. About 16 members attend the monthly Saturday meetings with the Poetry and Prose special interest groups having about eight regular attendees sharing their work. The Poetry Group meets at 10am on the first Thursday and Prose Group at 12 noon for a 12:30pm start on the third Thursday of the month at Annesley.

The 2023/24 Anthology *Tilting at Windmills* has been printed and bound. Nineteen authors have supplied a total of sixty-five items, consisting of short stories, poetry,



Southern Highlands: Gail Leighton-Daly, David McFarlane (Guest Speaker) and Kathryn Litchfield at our first meeting of the year.

plays, memoirs and even three drabbles for the anthology. An inhouse launch is being planned for the March meeting.

We've had a great start to 2024 with 18 members and our 2 visitors, Jennifer Mickle and Kerry Anderson in attendance. David McFarlane of Mittagong Print and Design was our guest speaker and provided a very valuable insight into what needs to be considered when planning to publish written work. Things to consider include, deciding the final appearance of the book, to getting a proof to edit before committing to print. He touched on things like book and print size, font uniformity, margins, images, covers and binding. Printers prefer PDF formatting as it is easier to work with. After questions and a round of applause Kathryn presented David with a 'Thank you' gift. This was followed by our normal meeting activities with Greg's etymology, Rick's Rants, Greg B's grammar gripes, 10-minute unseen writing, member presentations and discussions.

Kathryn Litchfield, Uta Purcell

STROUD WRITERS

The new year began with a keen turn-out for our first meeting on 18 January, which was also our Annual General Meeting. Our treasurer, Dianne, stepped down after 22 years' service in the role. She was warmly thanked for all her work and



Anne Andrews signing books at the launch of *Fantastic*.

amused us all with anecdotes of her journey from a tin on the table into which members tossed a few coins for tea and coffee (this was in the years before FAW affiliation when Stroud Writers were simply a group of friends interested in writing) to the 'joys' of online banking.

We rejoiced in the success of member Anne Andrews as she launched her four-book collection of

poetry, *Fantastic*, at Gloucester Library in December. The librarian, Cathy Devereux, gave a wonderful introduction. Anne spoke of her love of the written word and of the many experiences that inform her writing. The book was very well received by the many attendees.

We were delighted in the lead-up to Christmas to join in a Zoom catch up with our former president, Sue, in her homebase 'down south'. We shared some of our recent writings and received from Sue suggestions for books to read.

Our Readers' Corner session in each meeting is proving very popular as books are discussed and passed around. A current favourite is *The Dictionary of Lost Words*. One of our members was even lucky enough to see the Sydney Theatre Company's stage version.

Homework challenges suggested for us over the holiday period elicited some amusing and inter-

esting results and have continued happily into the new year.

Elizabeth Bradhurst

SUTHERLAND SHIRE FAW

The launch for our anthology, *A Fork in the Road*, was held on Saturday 10th February. It was a successful and enjoyable afternoon for us all. Crime writer and previous member, Dinuka McKenzie, author and member Christine Sykes, and I, each gave a short talk about writing. We had readings by our members, Sal Gallaher, Karina McDougall and Helen Armstrong, who each read part of their own story, plus another member's. Thank you to all those who attended. It is the fourth anthology, in recent years, that our Sutherland Shire FAW have produced. We will organise a link on our website soon, for those who want to grab a copy:

www.writersunleashed.com.au.

A thank you to Sylvia Vago and Pat Ruell, who were busy over the break organising the afternoon.

Looking back to last year, we had a great final meeting in November with readings of our Christmas theme story, discussion and festivities. For December, we had a Christmas/end of year luncheon to chat and relax before our January break.

For our February meeting, we had guest speaker Karen Lane, who is the founder of *The Writers Boot Camp*



'A Fork in the Road' anthology launch, with Sutherland Shire FAW Members, at Miranda RSL Club.
L-R: Julianne Miles-Brown (President), Sal Gallaher, Fiona Johnstone (Vice-President), Christine Sykes, Helen Armstrong, Lynn Sutherland, Karina McDougall, Robey Piggott (glasses), Joe Green, Sylvia Vago (Secretary), Peter Deady and Frank McGuire.

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Branch Reports

SUTHERLAND SHIRE

cont. from previous page

Australia. She discussed, Location, location; location: commas, capitals and colons. In March, we will be running some mini workshops, put on by our own members, plus exercises to stimulate our writing. While in April, our author and member Christine Sykes will be presenting a workshop on Memoir.

We look forward to a fabulous year ahead, full of writing, workshops and reading, and the challenges that await!

Julianne Miles-Brown

WOLLONDILLY FAW

2023 ended with our traditional edition of Christmas scribblings. Plates of food were shared and enjoyed, followed by an unusual

exchange/lucky dip of mystery gifts (value \$10 or less).

With promises to write a story for January and silent pledges to make life affirming new year's resolutions, we said farewell to the year that was.

Life is a series of ebb and flow. Sadly, our Branch Life Member Vince announced his retirement from FAW. Happily, we welcomed a new member, Hemat. We have 16 registered members and an average attendance of around 13.

The topic for February Scribblings was 'Decluttering'. This struck a familiar chord with many. Our gentle critique was preceded by the AGM. The executive roles were filled and together we hope to continue to foster friendship and support of the Wollondilly Branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers.

Annette Pearce



Vale

BRIAN ARMOUR

BRIAN ARMOUR was a member of the Fellowship of Australian Writers of NSW since 2004. He passed away peacefully at home, aged 71, on Thursday, 4 January 2024, from pancreatic cancer.

A memorial service was later held at Shelly Beach, Cronulla, on Wednesday 7 February, for family and friends.

He was born in 1952, grew up in the Sutherland Shire and attended Endeavour Sports High School in Caringbah from 1964 to 1970.

In 1984, Brian graduated from the University of Sydney.

Later Brian continued his education at the University of Technology.

Brian had a career in Information Technology, the Police and National Parks before devoting himself to full-time writing.

He represented Isolated Writers at State Council and General Meetings during 2009, as then Convenor Adrienne de Bouvier was unable to attend.

In 2010, Brian started the **Electronic Round Robin (ERR)**, following some initial teething problems, with seven contributors, and continued until December 2023.

He also wrote an e-book, *Future Crime*, which was published in 2013. It is available through Smashwords.com.

However, Brian faced tragedy when he lost his home at Eden during the devastating 2020 bushfires and moved back to Sydney.

Although I never had the opportunity to meet Brian in person, he will be sadly missed, especially with the Isolated Writers.

Brian was nominated for a DSA Award but, thanks to COVID, he never received it – despite being well-deserved.

Carolyn Cash

10 COMMANDMENTS OF WRITING

Contributed by Blue Mountains Writers

1. Collect ideas from many places; actively listen to the experiences of others; record family history, anecdotes, memoirs.
2. Read widely.
3. Just start. Get it out of your head and onto the page.
4. Invest time in writing. Write, write, write!
5. Write messy drafts and bottom drawer stories.
6. Write what you know and are passionate about; honour your own story.
7. Be professional; continue to learn, edit, polish, enter competitions, send off for publication.
8. Encourage fellow writers.
9. Share your writing with others for feedback and constructive criticism. Consider all feedback; it'll help you become a better writer; it's your story so only you can decide which feedback to use.
10. Be adventurous, take risks, step outside your comfort zone.

Poets Voice

Thoughtfulness

Thoughtfulness and kindness go together
 Just as two people can be birds of a feather
 When their relationship is new
 The centre of their universe is just those two
 And it doesn't even matter – what the weather.
 Thoughtfulness is when you pre-empt a need
 Your other has bad news, you do your good deed
 You listen while the story spills out
 Come to the rescue when you know what it's about
 Do what you do best, help by taking the lead.
 Kindness on the other hand comes in many guises
 Kindness is gentle and comes in many sizes
 As you age, and look back over many years
 You find lots of laughs but also lots of tears
 Then together you head forward, when the sun rises.
 So just as; bad versus good
 Have a look around your neighbourhood
 You have friends there that are new
 With one or two of them really true
 The secret is, being thoughtful, kind and good.

Colleen Parker, State President, FAW NSW

Stone the Bloody Crows

'It will never be seen again!
 'What are you on about, Joe?'
 'Don't tell you missed it, mate?'
 'I am afraid so!'
 'Gee,
 it was a once in a lifetime phenomenon
 I can't believe you didn't see it!
 It's got everyone talking,
 just like you to be the only old buggar
 not to be in a stew!'
 'Maybe so Joe,
 but in the meantime,
 while you are all shaking your heads
 and looking a little bit mystified.
 I'll just carry on regardless
 if only to defy!'
 'Stone the bloody crows, mate
 how can you be so calm?'
 As I said Joe,
 I missed it
 so I have no need to be bloody alarmed!'
Lyn Yates, Lambing Flat (Young) FAW

Remembrance and Reflection

(A Petrarchan Sonnet)

The deeds of men are fades of yesterday;
 their valour spent as we admire them now.
 And how these acts seem so remote somehow;
 it's hard to deeply feel those times were grey.
 I wonder whether I could do as they,
 to heed the call, dismiss my life, and vow
 to spend my worth in battle to endow
 a future with no hint of dire dismay.
 Their legacy was built on foreign shore.
 I'd like to think that I would heed the shout,
 to stand defiant in the face of foe.
 I loathe the stench of battle but, much more,
 I fear an imposition from without.
 I think that, as with most men, I would go.

Brian Tolagson, Port Macquarie-Hastings FAW

Bird Haikus

Rosella Parrot

Bright red head and bib
 Long slender tail, speckled wings
 Chattering loudly.

Crested Pigeon

Dancing to impress
 Head bobbing, tail up, wings spread
 Cooing and crooning.

Kookaburra

Sharp eyes, long sleek beak
 Watching below intently
 Swift flight, flash of blue.

Magpie

Warbling, beak skyward
 A black and white symphony
 Chortling merrily.

Hawk

Headless young pigeon
 Shrieking birds alert danger
 Ravenous brown hawk.

Grebe

From chalky-white eggs
 Nest of matted floating reeds
 Tiny fluffy chicks.

Wood Duck

Speckled grey, black, brown
 Grazing on grass quietly
 Content family.

*Maree Myhill,
 Lambing Flat-[Young] FAW*

SUBMISSIONS TO POETS VOICE:

Send your poem in the first instance to the Poetry Editor, Brian Tolagson: brian.tolagson@gmail.com for review and inclusion in the next edition of Writers Voice. Deadlines are the beginning of February, May, August or November, for the following month's edition.

NB: Poems accepted for inclusion on this page will be deemed to have been published and therefore are not eligible for entry into FAW competitions. Members are reminded to include your name, membership number and FAW branch with all submissions to ensure that all works presented here are from financial members.

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Competition Results

FAW Marjorie Barnard
Short Story Competition 2023

WINNER:

Roger Vickery, Freshwater NSW, for 'SPURS'.

[This story is reprinted below].

Prizewinning Story: 2023 Marjorie Barnard Competition

SPURS

by Roger Vickery

THE FIRST strike arrives at 2 am, exactly nine months after the day they were married.

Beth switches on a night light and sees Pete brushing and slapping at his arms. She touches his shoulder and points at his lips.

'No circulation,' Pete mouths. He pushes his ninety kilos body off their bed and strides about, swinging his arms backwards and forwards as if he's warming up for one of his rare bowling spells with the South Dubbo Cricket Club.

A plaster wall separates their rented flat from Dragan Vickovich, who starts his cleaning shifts at 6.30am. Beth sees Pete's feet thumping across the thin lino floor and knows Dragan must be wide awake. Not that he'd ever complain. Dragan is Beth's height; 1.4 metres to Pete's 1.9. When the two men pass in the corridor, he responds to Pete's 'g'day' with a tight smile and lowered eyes.

Pete paces and rests, paces and rests, until 6.30am when the mid-June Western sun slips a small amount of warmth into the flat. He wakes Beth and tells her the coldness is easing.

She sighs. 'Thank God. How about you take the day off?'

'Who'll run the bloody dealership?'

'Well, I could. It's only for...'

'Blokes don't buy from women. 'He holds up a big paw. 'Bush talking – not me.'

At 7.30 Beth hauls herself into Tojo, Pete's old Land Cruiser, turns the key and works the accelerator while Pete taps the fuel pump with a spanner. Tojo fires up, Beth slides into the passenger seat, and they rumble towards Pete's farm machinery dealership in Wellington Road.

'Let's grab a coffee,' Beth suggests.

'Not made of money, office instant do me.'

Beth squeezes his arm. 'Thanks, darling, I'll have a medium mocha.'

Pete downs his Cappuccino with three sugars before they reach the dealership.

Beth unlocks the office and switches on the

cont. opposite page...

JUDGE'S REPORT:

Marjorie Barnard Shorty Story Competition 2023

FROM 75 entries received this year I whittled a longlist of 13 short stories which I read and re-read. From this longlist I then drew up a shortlist of five stories, which were all excellent in their own ways.

When judging a short story competition I focus on characterisation and I recognised all the characters in these shortlisted stories: the kid throwing a tantrum while his parents dodge police after a botched service station robbery; the flatmate into meditation and creativity after attending a retreat; the love-sick, asthmatic Ford Fairlane driver who drives the girl he adores to her end of year ball; the Shirley Temple wannabe who dreams of stardom; and the husband and wife owners of a farm equipment dealership in a country town.

In each of these shortlisted stories the characters changed as a consequence of the events in the story, and they don't always get what they want. Two of these stories used a child's point of view very effectively. Dialogue was crisp and to the point. The authors of these short-listed stories handled back story well. The stories were well-structured with satisfying resolutions.

The winning story is 'Spurs' by Roger Vickery.

I would encourage the authors of the other shortlisted stories to enter them in other competitions and regret that I can only award one story with a prize.

'Spurs' is a clever title with a double meaning that is revealed at the end. I was impressed by the author's skill in showing rather than telling. For example, rather than telling us that Beth is Pete's second wife, the author mentions that Pete avoids driving past the family farm "he sold as part of his divorce settlement". There's a whole lot of back story in those few words. Also, rather than telling us that Beth has trouble hearing she "tugs his hips and turns him around" asking him to look at her and speak slowly.

Pete is an ex-rodeo rider – the tough and silent type – who doesn't want to worry his children when they visit. He is woken every night by un-explained pain and through the story he fears he has something that might kill him or, worse, that it's all in his mind, perhaps unresolved anger. But this story is not just about a medical problem, there are problems between Beth and Pete and financial problems. Pete and Beth are a likeable couple having a tough time and the author achieves a lot in under 3000 words.

Thank you for asking me to judge the Marjorie Barnard Short Story competition and congratulations to the winner, the short-listed authors and everyone who entered.

Pippa Kay

SPURS

cont. from previous page

computer. Pete clears the yard with a leaf blower even Beth can hear, removes tarps from the good quality harvesters and splashes buckets of warm water across the iced-up windscreens of uncovered vehicles.

He comes inside and fidgets until 9.01, the earliest time he can justify calling the Sydney office of Mahout Holdings, their main machinery supplier. Beth gives him a thumbs up as Baxter, Mahout's distribution manager, comes on the line.

'Been a month, Bax. Still no word from Sydney about renewing my franchise. Win-win, right? Why the hold-up?'

'Pete, mate, keep your shirt on. The offer will be there soon.'

It is a slow day. Pete sells some spares, drinks another two coffees, and spends 90 minutes with a father and son from Bonnie Doon while they debate the merits of retrofitting a roll cage to their quad bikes. Afterwards, he drives out to Geurie along the Arthurville Road to assure the owner of a faulty Kawasaki thrasher, which is a month out of warranty, he'll look after them.

Although that route adds thirty minutes to his trip, it means Pete avoids passing the family farm he sold five years ago as part of his divorce settlement from Janet. Whenever Beth tries to talk to him about his life on the farm, he shuts down the conversation.

Pete returns to the dealership at 5 pm. They drive home, chew some mouthfuls of Beth's defrosted beef casserole, and fall into bed.

##

The coldness returns at 2 am.

Pete switches on their oil column heater and resumes pacing and swinging his arms. After an hour Beth points towards Dragan's wall. Pete glares at her until she pulls the bed covers over her head.

A few minutes later he slumps into his recliner chair and begins twisting and jiggling, as if he's back in a rodeo chute with his legs straddling a snorting bull.

One hour later he mutters – 'Bugger Dragan!' – and recommences pacing.

##

The coldness returns at 2 am on the next day... and the next.

When it eases after dawn, Pete and Beth snatch two hours sleep and zombie walk through their duties at the dealership.

On the fifth day, Beth persuades Pete to visit Dr Ahuja.

'Not a patch on old Doc Singh,' he complains, waving scripts for sleeping tablets and anti-inflammatories.

'Pinched nerve,' Ahuja says, 'be patient, wait it out'.

The medications don't help. The coldness continues. On the seventh night, Beth sees bulges appearing in

their common wall. Little Dragan has had enough.

At lunchtime the following day, Beth tells Pete she needs 'some me time'. She climbs into Tojo, crunches the manual gears, and drives away, craning her head to see over the dashboard.

She parks outside Carpet Court in Hawthorn Street, rushes in, buys sixteen 90-centimetre carpet squares and drives to their block. She slides a note under Dragan's door – DON'T CONTACT LANDLORD. WILL FIX. BETH XX – unlocks their flat, kneels down with a roll of double-sided tape, and sticks two rows of carpet squares across the floor.

Beth speeds back to the dealership and waits until late afternoon, pecking at the computer keys, stomach acid bubbling.

'I've made a walking track,' she announces, eyes fixed on an MYOB report for Mahout. 'So you're not stuck in the recliner. So you can move around more quietly.'

She tenses, ready for a flare up. Instead, she feels Pete lifting her from the chair. As he wraps his big arms around her, she looks up and sees a ray of western sun ignite his Jade green eyes.

'If you have to, you know, get up at night.'

Pete smiles. 'Know a lodger had the same idea.'

##

On their honeymoon, lying side by side on Ballina Beach, Beth had teased Pete about how she'd lost hope her boss would ask her out.

'The spark's there. We're forty-something and fancy free. What's the problem?'

Pete had grinned. 'You were office manager, blow in from the city. Sexual harassment all the go there. Couldn't risk a lawsuit over hanky-panky at work.'

'Who says Hanky-panky? How old are you again?'

'Bloke with standards, me.'

'So one night I came visiting.'

'With two bottles of Mudgee red.'

'And discovered your secret lodger.'

Beth had draped a towel across Pete's stomach and rested her hand on his speedos.

'Oh, I think he might be home.'

##

Pete's teenage sons cycle over for their fortnightly sleep-over.

Too tired for touch footy in the park, Pete rips into them for lying around and staring into their phones.

Bobby, the oldest, flares up and Sean, holding back tears, backs his brother.

'Little pricks,' he mouths, as they peddle home a day early.

After the evening meal, Pete drops into the recliner and flicks mindlessly through channels.

Beth kills the sound. 'Shouldn't you tell the boys what's happening?'

'Too young.' He stands and moves away. 'Bobby

cont.next page...

SPURS

cont. from previous page

fourteen, Sean eleven. No point worryin' em.'

Beth tugs his hips and turns him around. 'Please look at me and speak slowly.'

Pete looks into space. 'Dad went with the bowel. I was seventeen, startin' on the rodeo circuit, Mum kept it quiet. Mercy on me. Better Sean and Bobby think... grumpy old bastard.'

'Please go back to Ahuja.'

'Bullshit! Enough bloody trouble, this coldness. 'The bags under his eyes are quivering. 'All I need, another bloody woman yapping...'

Beth runs into the bedroom, locks the door, and watches the handle being twisted back and forth.

'Why don't you break the door down? That's what a macho bloke would do.'

'Please Beth...'

'I'm another bloody yapping woman, am I?'

Her hearing aids are crackling.

'Darl, the neighbours... please.'

Maybe the batteries are low?

Her mother time travels into the room. 'Remove your batteries before bed. How many times... lazy, wasteful brat... think we're made of fucking money!'

'Janet nagged at you to open up. But you stayed tough and silent and look how that worked out. I plead with you to go back to your doctor. That makes me another bloody yapping woman?' Am I shrieking like Mum? Too fucking bad. 'Rodeo kings know best, eh?'

Pete yells through the keyhole. 'I'm sorry, Beth, Sorry, I'll go back, OK?'

I can't let this coldness turn me into a bitch.

##

Ahuja orders a range of X-rays. Apart from chipped bones from his rodeo days, Pete appears healthy. But the ice pick attacks continue. Sometimes they strike during the day.

Through trial-and-error Beth learns rubbing Pete's arms and back restores some of his blood flow. Beth works on his body: 30 minutes on; 20 minutes off; and paces beside him as he plods along the carpet track in double thick ski socks.

The regimen, and the imported ear plugs Beth leaves outside Dragan's door, placates their neighbour. He doesn't shrink when he encounters Pete in the hallway.

'Pity, that's why,' Pete tells Beth.

On rare occasions when he snatches some sleep between 2 am and dawn, Beth naps in bed with her hearing aids set on maximum to make sure she doesn't miss the 7 am alarm.

Waking Pete is a battle.

To celebrate their first anniversary, Beth cooks a full English breakfast and places the tray next to Pete's recliner. When she shakes his arm, he backhands her,

sending toast, bacon, eggs, tomato, and black pudding flying across the floor.

Pete snores on while she cleans up the mess.

At 7.45am Beth drives them to work. Tojo's manual shift no longer fazes her. She returns to the flat on auto pilot and falls asleep. At 1pm she returns to the dealership with a packed lunch and a thermos of coffee. Then she manages the accounts, pushes Mahout for news on the renewal, and shadows Pete when he's fumbling to close a sale.

One afternoon, Pete points to his head. 'Something wrong here. Neurotic, that's me, eh?'

'Who said that, Ahuja?'

'Janet.' Pete sniffs. 'You said open up... so I told her about the coldness, dealership shit... whole catastrophe. Don't rev up, darl, not blamin' you.'

'And Janet said... ?'

'She went online, checking out shrink sites. She says, y'know, re-marrying too quick, coldness could be some sorta physical mani-fes-tat-ion... trauma... anxiety... bullshit... bullshit.' Pete tries to smile. 'But got me thinkin'. Maybe they missed a tumour or something?'

##

Ahuja refers them to Economides, a Macquarie Street neurologist.

Beth loathes the Western sun that lasers her eyes as she peers over Tojo's steering wheel on the four hours' drive from Dubbo to the Blue Mountains. Her pupils are still red and weeping as she manoeuvres Tojo's battered body between two pristine SUVs into a space at the Domain parking station.

'Worse goin' back. My turn drivin' then,' Pete says.

That isn't an option.

Sitting opposite the specialist, Beth focuses her Murine-soaked eyes on Economides's polka dot bow tie, blue braces, and red jumbo-sized glasses.

Show pony. Whoa, I sound like a country bumpkin.

'Well, Mr Nixon. The good news is... no evidence of abnormality, no tumours or growths... all due no doubt to good country...'

'And the bad news?' Beth asks.

Economides steeples his fingers. 'There are signs of decreased circulation. Your blood flow is somewhat depleted. Why at night? Despite our advances, medical science struggles to penetrate the complex relationship between mind and body.'

'Can't you suggest a treatment?' Beth asks.

Economides continues as if Pete is the only person in the room. 'Well, we can give you something that might de-activate your parasympathetic nervous system.'

Pete swears. 'More sleeping tablets?'

'A mild anti-depressant that may help to... uh... in the wee hours. And a massage regimen would not go astray'

'Where do we find the money for that?'

‘I can give a referral to a good psychiatrist in Orange... Joe Erlanger at Dudley Private. He is something of a... well... Inspector Morse in his field. There are some intriguing features... the incident manifesting nine months after your wedding. Who can say what subconscious anxiety may lie therein?’

Pete sags when he climbs into Tojo. ‘Told yuh. Going loony.’

‘What bull rider isn’t?’ Beth squeezes his arm. ‘Let’s try Erlanger. We’ll find the money. And I’m doing a massage course.’

##

Beth loves her 10-week remedial massage course at Dubbo TAFE.

In the early weeks students practise on each other. As Beth is nervously pressing into the back of her first patient, their tutor, Mary Liu, tells Beth: ‘If you really connect with your client, you’ll hear a deep gurgle escaping from their stomach. That’s the body’s way of saying: I trust you.’

Beth’s new skills ease some of Pete’s ice pick symptoms. But the coldness never takes a holiday.

One dawn, despite being utterly exhausted, Pete cannot fall asleep. ‘Something growing inside me,’ he moans.

Next week it is Beth’s turn on the massage table. When she closes her eyes and feels gentle hands slowly rotate across her stomach, she realizes she’s weeping.

‘Let it out, hon,’ Mary Liu intones. ‘Let it out.’

Her stomach gurgles like a drain.

Inspired, every evening, Beth kneads and caresses Pete, trying to set fire to his coldness.

One night she asks him about his family farm. He shows her a photo album filled with snapshots of dogs, prize bulls, nuggety men in rolled up sleeves, women in Sunday best, and a grinning, blond-haired boy in a 10-gallon Akubra hat. His eyes are jade green.

##

Joe Erlanger conducts his sessions through video conferences, provided the link to Dubbo doesn’t drop out.

‘Unresolved anger, Erlanger’s diagnosis,’ Pete confides on the massage table. ‘Putting me on stronger funny juice.’

‘Just let it out, darling, let it out...’

Beth hears his stomach gurgle. She leans down and her tears wet his hairy back.

##

Mahout refuses to renew the franchise or provide reasons. A lawyer at the Bultje Street Legal Service tells them Mahout’s conduct is ‘unethical but not actionable’.

They sub-let the yard and Pete applies for a disability pension. Beth supplements their income with temporary office work and massage sessions.

If the coldness hits in the late afternoon, Beth’s round

of walking, taking and massaging lasts until evening and re-commences when the worst pains return in the early hours.

Pete rarely leaves the flat. Janet says he is too depressed to see the boys.

One afternoon Pete declares, ‘Had it. You a slave. Had it. Do anything, darl. Just tell me what.’

Beth rings Erlanger. He books Pete into the South Pacific Private hospital near Manly. She hasn’t a clue how they’ll pay for it.

On the trip down to Sydney, Beth barely notices the low slanting Western sun.

While Pete slumps in reception at the South Pacific, waiting for someone to admit him, Beth spies Pete’s medical report on the counter. She flips it open and skims Erlanger’s scanned handwritten notes. Conversion Hysteria? Paranoid depression?

Beth eases back as the admitting nurse arrives.

‘Okey-dokey, Mr Nixon, are we ready for a soft bed and a nice cuppa?’

Anger and fear flywheel through Beth.

‘Fuck that,’ she says.

Back in Tojo, Beth takes Pete’s hand. ‘We need someone who knows the real Pete. Your family doctor, the one before Ahuja, where did he go?’

‘Singhy? No idea. Pretty old now. Could be gaga?’ He tries to smile. ‘Be good choice, eh? Lot in common.’

##

Pete remembers Singh talking about the joys of rock fishing at Woolgoolga. ‘Turbans and coconuts, far as the eye,’ Singh said.

She contacts Singh through Linked in. Sure enough, he is living in the Sikh capital of Australia.

Have restricted right to practice, he replies. Happy to see the rodeo boy.

Tojo can’t be relied on to reach Woolgoolga. They take a Greyhound to Sydney, spend a restless night in a backpacker room and board another bus the next day.

Woolgoolga is another country... gleaming white Arabian night temples, frond-shedding palm trees, men in turbans and Hawaiian shirts, women gliding past in colourful saris.

Beth vows her next dress will have a sash of peacock.

They draw in the sea air and stroll in a half-dream state until they find themselves outside Singh’s bungalow. Beth’s brief sense of disconnection evaporates. Acid invades her stomach. She stands beside Pete and grips his hand.

He is waiting for her to use the pink cockatoo-shaped door knocker. She doesn’t move. She can’t. Pete dries his hand and raps the bird’s beak against the teak door as if he is sounding an alarm.

Singh is stooped and white-haired.

cont.next page...

SPURS

cont. from previous page

God help us, he looks better than Pete.

'I'm mostly influenza and bronchitis these days,' Singh says. 'Nonetheless, I still have some grey matter.'

He guides them into a back room where he taps Pete's chest and prods and pulls at his arms. 'All right young fellow, do you feel better when Beth massages you here?' Singh presses the fleshy dip between Pete's left shoulder and rib cage.

'Yeah, maybe.'

'I want you X-rayed in that area.'

Beth sighs. 'He's been checked out every which way. Can't you use the old X-rays?'

Singh rests a pen on Pete's shoulder and points it diagonally towards Pete's navel. 'Years ago, I had a patient with similar symptoms. We got lucky. I fluked the correct angles to X-ray and the radiologist was a bloody wizard.'

'What did you find?'

'Spurs.'

Singh is right. The scans reveal sprouts of fine cartilage protruding from Pete's top ribs.

'These sharp instruments from Pete's rodeo injuries colonized the nerves running down his arms. During the day, his movements distributed sufficient blood and nerve messages. But while he slept, the spurs operated like tourniquets, applying increasing pressure on his circulatory system.'

'My chances?' asks Pete.

'The coldness should disappear as soon as a surgeon cuts out the spurs.'

Pete pumps the air.

'But you'll need months of physiotherapy... and Beth's apparently miraculous massages.'

Pete turns toward Beth and hugs her. As she looks up at him a shaft of sunlight darts through the Singh's blinds and lights up his eyes.

Still jade green.

She hears her stomach gurgle.



Vale

ELAINE BURTON

THE GARDEN at number 4 (the street name eludes me) Lane Cove crept right up to the back verandah, where a couple of dishes fixed to the handrail served as food bowls for the many avian visitors. Shrubs and trees nestled close to the house hidden from neighbouring views.

The first time I visited Elaine's home to prepare *Writers Voice* for mailing out to the members, we waited there for the other helpers, to arrive. A kookaburra, and a magpie were particularly friendly and flashes of colour from the rosellas, flitted in and out. I was amazed at the bush life so close to the city.

It was quite a chore going through the procedures of posting the magazine: sorting, bagging the address label and magazine, sealing, and depositing it in the correct box, ready for delivery to the Post Office. A team of us including the late Alan Russell (Hon. Secretary), Barbara Snell (Isolated Writers' Coordinator), Thelma Flower (Membership Secretary) and occasionally other volunteers. Always accompanied by chit-chat, including happenings in the various branches the volunteers represented.



The late Elaine Burton
Photo circa 2017

The activity was interrupted by morning tea. The work area was cleared, replaced by a clean tablecloth, cups, saucers and plates so we could enjoy Elaine's cooking; cake, scones or slice and her old-world charming hospitality.

After the Fellowship rented a room at The Writer's Centre and we could use their facilities, Elaine continued to show up and do her part in bagging and sealing the magazine.

Elaine was an impeccable hostess, a great organizer and worker, a stalwart supporter of the FAW and its ideals. She also attended the Quarterly meetings in the City through the Presidency's of Hilary Lindsay, Beverly Earnshaw, Ken Challenor, Peter Pike and Trevar Langlands.

Delegates to the State Council will recall Elaine's dedication, loyalty and practical assistance to the Fellowship in so many ways. She was awarded life membership and her services were acknowledged with a Distinguished Service Award.

Elaine passed away last year. Rest in Peace Elaine.

Peter Pike

Isolated Writers' Convenor

I NEED your help! I've spoken with Carolyn Cash who has held this role for decades and while we have been shuffling the deck chairs renewing the Leadership Roles, I believe Carolyn needs a change as well. Carolyn has her *Right Royal Roundup* podcast, and I think she deserves a little more time to pursue her personal interests. As her writing, grammar, and punctuation are high, I have invited her to join the Panel of Readers for Seniors Card which she and Narelle have accepted. Carolyn and my friendship began in 1996, I was president of Sutherland Branch and she was my Secretary.

Carolyn has held the fort until I could reach out to everyone because with the sad loss of Brian Armour, I can see the members need uplifting. I offer my full support, but I would like to hear from anyone (whether currently an Isolated Member or not) who would like to step up into a Leadership position and join the current team with **Jenny England** jennyengland60@gmail.com and **Jill Schuler** jillschuler9@gmail.com the IW Newsletter Editors, who are 'waiting in the wings' to hear from you, especially if you have technology skills, but that is not a 'deal-breaker'.

A new generation at State level is proving an exciting new vision for us, and I feel certain that there is another 'special' somebody out there who would like to do similar and help bond those who are isolated. Please give this some serious thought so that 2024 can be a renewing of ideas and projects to interact with each other and develop your own writing projects.

Colleen, State President

Help for Writers

José F Nodar, a member of the Isolated Writers branch of FAW NSW, is a published author with a lot of experience in all matters relating to the written word. José offers a comprehensive range of services to writers through his extensive business network, including...

- **Camden Books:** Promote your novel on Facebook, LinkedIn and NextDoor Australia, each month
- **World Book Reviews:** A cost-effective book review service
- **Quick Story Tales:** A quick and easy way to get paid for your short stories or poetry and get them published (and receive a free e-book at the end of the year!)
- **Writer Services:** Services at reasonable costs for authors, from mock-ups to videos and the rest.
- **Northport Booksellers:** A free service to newbie authors, with a request to consider a donation if the individual is happy with advice or service received.

For more information, visit José's website <https://linktr.ee/jfnodar>.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD HONOUR ROLL



Irene Acland*	Joan Dwyer	Vince Morrison	Mei-Ling Venning
Denise Aldridge	Margaret Ekin	Esther Osborne	Linda Visman
Carolyn Alfonzetti	Thelma Flower*	Rosemary Peters	Ted Webber
Patricia Allen	Shirley Goodbar	Peter F Pike	Margaret Wilkinson
Ellen Ash	Eileen Gray	Margaret Robinson*	Margaret Young*
Gavin Austin	Pip Griffin	Rina Robinson	
Barbara Aylott	Mavis Gunter	Alan Russell*	FAW NSW
Eileen Backhus*	Mavis Hayes*	Albert Scott*	LIFE MEMBERS
Jill Baggett	Dr Anne Howard	Bridget Sharp	Elaine Burton *
Rosemary Baldry	Margaret Jackson	Dr John Sheppard	Maureen Kelly <small>OAM</small>
Margaret Barlow	John Jacobs	Margot Shugg	Trevar Langlands *
Miriam Bates	Maureen Kelly <small>OAM</small>	Barbara Snel	Dr. Hilarie Lindsay *
Cyril Bentley*	Lyn Leerson	Yvonne Sorensen	Colleen Parker
Meryl Bentley*	Pat Lindsay*	Dorothe Squires-Cooper	Jean Paddison *
Elaine Burton	Helen Luidens*	Pat Strong *	Peter Pike
Ken Challenor*	Johan Luidens	Greg Tome	Barbara Snel
Jan Dean	Elizabeth McVie	Frank Urban	Ron Stevens *
Beryl Dundas*	Jan Mitchell	Carney Vaughan	

*Deceased

Writing Competition

Closing date 30 June 2024:

SCRIBES WRITERS 'POETIC LICENCE' OPEN POETRY COMPETITION 2024

Style: Bush Verse

Theme: Open.

Line count 60 maximum (excluding title)

Prizes: 1st \$200 2nd \$100 Highly

Commended and Commended

Certificates at the judge's discretion

Entry fee: \$10. Entry via email or post.

Please note all postal entries must be postmarked on or before closing date.

Please note we can no longer accept cheques. All entry fees must be via EFT.

For full **competition details, conditions and Entry Form** please visit the Scribes Writers website and follow links to the Poetry Competition page.

www.scribeswriters.com

Writing Competitions



Communities
& Justice



SENIORS' STORIES VOLUME 10

Submissions Open Sunday 21 April 2024
Submissions Close 5pm Sunday 2 June 2024

THE NSW Dept of Communities and Justice and the Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW Inc (FAW) are again conducting a Short Story Competition. The Top 100 stories will be published in Seniors' Stories Vol. 10 and launched in November 2024.

Tap into your memories, ask family/friends for their anecdotes, or maybe you are witness to others who love living every day to its fullest... and create a short story for others to enjoy.

NORMAL COMPETITION CONDITIONS

Unless stated otherwise, these conditions apply to ALL WRITING COMPETITIONS

- Entries should be submitted in English, using one side of A4 paper, typed double-spaced (except poetry) in a standard typeface (12 pt min.), using generous margins. No fancy fonts, clip art or decorations of any kind.
- NO names or addresses to appear on manuscripts. A separate COVER SHEET must be attached, containing the title of the entry, competition name, section category if applicable, word or line count, author's name, address, telephone number and email address (if available). Title and page number (ONLY) of the entry should appear on each page of the manuscript.
- Entries must be original work and must not have won a cash prize in any other competition nor been published in any form, as at the closing date of the competition.
- Entries may be entered in more than one competition at the time of entry HOWEVER the entry must be withdrawn from any subsequent competitions if the writer is advised prior to the closing dates that the entry was successful elsewhere with a cash prize.
- Cheques and/or money orders should be made payable to the organisers, unless otherwise stipulated. Multiple entries may be paid with one cheque or money order – do not send coins or stamps.
- Copyright remains with the author. Entries will not be returned and will be destroyed after the announcement of results.
- The judges' decisions will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- If you require a copy of the results mailed to you, please send a standard DL-sized stamped, self-addressed envelope (SSAE) with your entry.

These are general guidelines. For complete conditions relating to individual competitions, and to obtain entry forms (where required), contact the relevant competition organisers.

TERMS and CONDITIONS

1. The competition is open to all New South Wales Seniors Card and Senior Savers Card holders.
2. Seniors Card Membership Number must be included on the entry form.
3. Seniors Card Membership, competition entry and Workshops are FREE.
4. The theme for this year is: **'WHAT MADE ME'**.
5. **Story length max. 1,000 words** (Poetry not accepted). Excess word count will be immediately disqualified (the title is exempt).
6. Multiple entries may be submitted but only one will be published. No entries will be accepted outside the stated competition dates and times, **the Entry Form closing promptly at 5pm, Sunday 2nd June 2024.**
7. The top 100 entries will be published in the Seniors Card anthology to be released in November 2024.
8. The judge's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.
9. Entry form will be available **ONLINE** on the FAW website www.fawns.org.au from **Sunday 21 April 2024**. Your story can be submitted online along with your entry form.
10. Due to the requirement of the printer, entries to be in digital form only..
11. Entries must be a Word document, **not a PDF or Jpeg**.
12. Entries sent in a format other than Word cannot be accepted.
13. Entries should be typed in 12pt font, double spaced.
14. **AUTHOR NAME SHOULD ONLY APPEAR ON THE ENTRY FORM – NOT THE STORY.**

Queries please contact: Cate Plink 0492 833 522 or email compconvenor@fawns.org.au

FREE WORKSHOPS

Workshops dates for the Vol. 10 competition

February 21st	Wellington Library	1.00pm to 3.00pm
February 22nd	Swansea Library	1.00pm to 3.00pm
March 14th	Chatswood Dougherty Community Centre 7 Victor Street	11.00am to 1.00pm
March 21st	Wollongong Library	10.30am to 12.30pm
April 2nd	Hurstville Library	10.30am to 12.30pm
April 12th	NSW State Library Macquarie St, Sydney	10.30 to 12.30pm.

To book your Workshop session, please phone 0413 285 431.



**Fellowship of Australian Writers
New South Wales Inc**

Closing date 31 August 2024:

HILARIE LINDSAY YOUNG WRITERS 2024 POETRY COMPETITION FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Entries are sought in the following categories:

SECTION 1: Years 10, 11 & 12	(max lines 60)	Prize \$125
SECTION 2: Years 7, 8 & 9	(max lines 40)	Prize \$90
SECTION 3: Years 5 & 6	(max lines 40)	Prize \$65
SECTION 4: Year 4 & under	(max lines 20)	Prize \$50

Entrant's name must appear on the entry form ONLY.

The entry fee is **\$5.00** per poem submitted.

All entries and payments should be done via the submission form on the fawns.org.au website with the entry attached where indicated as a word document.

Should an online submission not be available, students may request an entry form and payment details from compconvenor@fawns.org.au.

Entries must be student's own work, unpublished and not having won any competition at time of entry.

Normal Competition Conditions apply (*opposite page*).

**Closing date for the competition is 6pm
31st August 2024.**

Winners will be notified prior to 31st October 2024.

For any further information please contact the competition convenor, Cate Plink:

The Convenor
Hilarie Lindsay Young Writers Competition
Email compconvenor@gmail.com
Phone 0492 833 522

Closing date 31 August 2024:

JEAN STONE AWARD 2024 CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

(Failure to comply with the following conditions will result in disqualification without refund).

- 1 The Award is for a poem or group of poems up to 60 lines.
- 2 Entrants must be permanent residents of Australia.
- 3 Submitted entries must not have previously been published, nor be under consideration for publication. Entries may have been entered in other competitions but not won a monetary prize.
- 4 Multiple entries are permitted, a separate Entry Form must be submitted with each entry.
- 5 Entry Fee is **\$15.00** per entry.
- 6 **The closing date is 6pm Saturday 31st August 2024.**
- 7 Entries are to be submitted and paid for online, using a secure credit card payment system via the form available on the FAW website at www.fawns.org.au. The entry document can be attached before submitting (Word format only please).
- 8 For those unable to use the online form, a separate form will be forwarded by email from compconvenor@fawns.org.au
- 9 **The author's identity must appear on the Entry Form ONLY. The author's name must NOT appear on the entry document.**
- 10 The results, and the judge's report, will be emailed to all contestants after 31st October 2024.
- 11 The author retains copyright to all work submitted, although prize-winning entries must be available for publication in the Fellowship's bulletin *Writers Voice* and on the FAW NSW website. Unsuccessful entries will not be returned.
- 12 Entries must be original, creative and inspiring works which present to the audience an engaging work of literary excellence.
- 13 The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. There will be no individual appraisals.
- 14 FAW NSW reserves the right not to award any prizes if, in the judge's estimation, no entries of sufficient merit are received.
- 15 Normal Competition Conditions apply (*opposite page*).

THE AWARD

PRIZE: \$500

Enquiries:

Cate Plink, Competitions Convenor
8/15-21 Gosford Avenue
THE Entrance NSW 2261
OR email compconvenor@gmail.com
Phone 0492 833 522

Writing Competitions

Closing date 15 May, 2024:

EASTWOOD/HILLS FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIAN WRITERS LITERARY COMPETITION 2024

All categories Open Theme

CATEGORY 1: FLASH FICTION

Max 500 words. First Prize \$150, Second Prize \$50

CATEGORY 2: PHILIPPA HOLLAND AWARD FOR POETRY

Includes all forms of poetry except Bush Poetry (see separate Boree Log competition below).

Max 80 lines per poem. 1st Prize \$150, 2nd Prize \$50

CATEGORY 3: ALAN RUSSELL AWARD FOR MEMOIR

Max 1,500 words. First Prize \$150, Second Prize \$50

CATEGORY 4: SHORT STORY

Max 1,500 words. First Prize \$150, Second Prize \$50

Entry Fee: \$8 per entry or \$30 for 4 entries.

Cheques or money orders in AUD payable to: FAW (Eastwood Hills). Entries must be post-marked on or before the closing date.

Fees can also be sent electronically – details are on the branch website. Please Note: Entries can now be submitted online.

Each entry must be accompanied by a separate signed entry form. Conditions of entry and entry forms can be found on the Eastwood-Hills FAW website:

hillsfaw.wordpress.com

Enquiries: Carolyn Alfonzetti – email:

carolyn.alfonzetti@me.com

Closing date 15 May, 2024:

EASTWOOD/HILLS FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIAN WRITERS BOREE LOG AWARD FOR BUSH VERSE 2024

First Prize: \$100 plus a trophy and certificate. Entrants are eligible for one award only.

Ballads to be in perfect rhyme and metre with max 80 lines and an Australian bush theme.

Entry Fee: \$8 per entry or \$30 for 4 entries (maximum).

Cheques or money orders in AUD payable to: FAW (Eastwood Hills). Entries must be post-marked on or before the closing date.

Fees can also be sent electronically – details are on the branch website. Please Note: Entries can now be submitted online.

Each entry must be accompanied by a separate signed entry form. Conditions of entry and entry forms can be found on the Eastwood-Hills FAW website:

hillsfaw.wordpress.com

Enquiries: Carolyn Alfonzetti – email:

carolyn.alfonzetti@me.com

Competition Results

RESULTS: LAMBING FLAT YOUNG FAW

National Cherry Festival Writing Competition 2023

Celebrating 41 years at Young 1982–2023

ADULT SHORT STORY

First Place: 'Fair Game', Alan Hewett, Wodonga VIC

Second Place: 'I Owe It All To You Dad', Mike Woodhouse, Bowral NSW

Third Place: 'I'm Sorry', Vikki Bye, Yarrowonga VIC

Highly Commended:

'The Trenches', Lee Mckerracher, Raby NSW;

'A Bump In The Road', Greg Schmidt, Claremont Meadows NSW;

'Divine Intervention', Irene Dalgety Timpone, Atherton QLD

Commended:

'What Came After', Elle Vidovich, Tugun QLD;

'Coffee Cravings', Dianne Wiggins, Bonny Hills NSW;

'The Lesson', Barry Riley, Woy Woy NSW

ADULT POETRY

First Place: 'Field To Page', Julie Butler, Walcha NSW

Second Place: 'If I Don't Remember', Maria C Barreda-Hanson, Bandra Point NSW

Third Place: 'Faith Of My Father', Catherine Lee, Mona Vale NSW

Highly Commended:

'The Wedding Dress', Margaret Armstrong, Bateman's Bay NSW;

'It Lies There Alone', Ilana Krueger;

'Paradox', Colleen Keating, Normanhurst NSW

Commended:

'On Drifting Cloud', Colleen Keating, Normanhurst NSW;

'One Cool Evening In May', Kate Maxwell, Kirribilli NSW;

'Small Town Siren', Jane Cottee, Oaks Estate ACT

Other categories were for School Students as follows:

- Short Story Section Years 7-8-9
- Short Story Section Years 10-11-12
- Poetry Section Years 7-8-9
- Poetry Section Years 10-11-12
- Junior Primary School Short Story Years 1-2-3
- Primary School Short Story Years 4-5-6
- Junior Primary School Poetry Years 1-2-3
- Primary School Poetry Years 4-5-6

The **full Results Sheet** is available by email from the Lambing Flat branch lambingflatfaw@gmail.com.

Memoir

I Will See You in My Dreams

Lyn Yates, Lambing Flat (Young) FAW

I HAVE met many memorable characters during my time as a care provider which has taken me into many varied communities. It was in the year 2000 I arrived in a small copper mining town in South Australia on Ngadjuri country.

There is no denying this is a place where time appeared to have stood still, the older generation being held in high esteem, even school children addressing my clients' appropriately as Mr or Mrs when out and about due to medical appointments, shopping or other necessities. Town folk also took the time to directly enquire about the health and sporting interests of their ageing identities listening intently to their vivid recollections.

There are always one or two clients who tug at the heart strings; Mr Jim Stevens (fictitious) was one such individual. The brief I received from my colleagues described Jim as a disagreeable seventy-two-year-old bushie; who resented the fact his city slicker daughter insisted upon him moving into town. To reside in one of seven aligned council owned stone cottages of a bygone era with a small frontage enclosed by a white picket fence. 'This is no place for a man used to the open spaces and sleeping under the stars!' He cursed, regardless his protest fell on deaf ears. I was informed at a much later date my bosses always allotted me the problematic consumers saying; 'this one's for Lyn, she'll sort it!'

Its Monday midday, time to knock on Mr Jim Stevens door, it took a while before I was met with a disdainful gaze from a tall, lean weather-beaten featured man scratching a five-day growth. Smelt like hadn't washed for ten months, dressed in a faded flannelette shirt, filthy trousers and boots that looked older than himself.

'Oh no; not another bloody do-gooder,' he bellowed.

'Attitude problem, you and I are going to get along like a house on fire!' I answered without batting an eyelid. 'My name is Lyn, I've come to make you a sandwich and a cuppa, how do you take your tea?' Jim's gruff reply is quick and defiant. 'Strong and black like my women!' My comeback is swift and deliberate, looking towards the heavens I respectfully make the sign of the Cross uttering. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; thank God I am white!' Jim roared with laughter. 'You'll do me, girl' eagerly motioning my entry. I knew I was in like Flynn! From then on Jim keenly awaited my arrival; always found lying outstretched on the carpet leaning on his elbow, continuously smoking cigarettes stubbing the butts into a rusty tobacco tin.

An unusual addition to Jim's care package was a 9:00pm visit to make sure he hadn't headed for the hills under the cover of darkness. There was no such clothing as pyjamas in Jim's world, it was a miracle if I achieved putting him to bed dressed as he had been all day, pulling off his boots as he reluctantly conceded muttering, 'a bloke should be allowed to die under a starry sky.'

'God love you Jim, I will see you in the morning'. I responded smiling having placed the cigarettes and matches out of harm's way. Then much to my surprise he burst into a hearty rendition, 'Goodnight Irene, I will see you in my dreams.' This became a nightly ritual as I quietly turn the key in the front door.

Then there was Jean an eighty-four old widow who lived alone on a small acreage.

'I'll have you know this is my no-good son's idea, I don't want any interfering social worker telling me what I can and can't do,' Jean yells shaking a very crooked walking stick in my direction. 'Well she's not hard of hearing,' I mutter alighting from the safety of the community car.

'Afternoon Mrs Thompson; my name is Lyn, I've been told you're a little concerned about your future, deciding on the direct approach, no pussie-footing around with this one. 'Uh! You better come inside; I'll put the kettle on.

I follow close behind into a homely sunlit front room where two very large cats were outstretched on a faded floral lounge flexing long sharp claws with no intention of moving for anyone. 'That's Tiddlers and Marmalade', Jean mumbles as I am led into the kitchen where the aroma of freshly baked apple pies fill the air. 'Take a seat, you can call me Jean' I am told by a sturdy build woman dressed in clothing of yesteryear covered by a flour dusted apron, drivelled greying hair tried in a bun, without make up, what you see is what you get; I immediately liked this aged individual.

After being poured a freshly brewed piping hot cuppa from knitted cosy covered teapot. No teabags here. I thought there is something about fine China, a generous serving of apple pie and cream which takes you back to a bygone era.

'So Jean, what's troubling you?' 'It's me apple trees, they're getting beyond me, I can't get up the ladder to prune the buggars,' she answers dismally. 'That no good son of mine is bloody useless, he just wants to put me in a home and sell the place. It will be over my dead body,' she hastily adds. 'Don't worry Jean I am sure we can arrange for someone to prune the trees, is that's the only problem?' Jean smile said it all. 'Yes girlie, I can manage everything else, it's been fifteen years since my hubby Tom died, I am still driving the old Ute, she's a bit of a rust bucket but the local copper turns a blind eye. After a second helping of the best apple pie I have ever tasted, Jean invites me to take a gander at the veggie patch.

Amazed at the abundance, 'oh, my God Jean; how to you do it?' 'It's the soil girlie, lots of compost and manure from my girls as she recovers six freshly laid eggs from the hutch. As Jean hands me a cane basket full of fresh produce and a bunch of fragrant roses there's a wrinkle in her eye as she poses a startling question. 'I'm hoping you're not married girlie; thinking you might be the one to take that useless son off my hands' 'No takers there Jean', I laugh waving goodbye with a promise to return to resolve the issue of the Jean's much loved apple trees.

□

Literary Achievements

BLUE MOUNTAINS FAW

Pat Allen, Rosemary Baldry, Pirie Klemmer, Margaret Onus, Chloé Steward and Jeanette Temesvary – each had an untitled Tanka published in *Eucalypt: A Tanka Journal*, Issue 35, November 2023.

Pat Allen

Two short story memoirs accepted for publication by Kani Consultants in November 2023: 'A Pesky Lady' published in *Pets* and 'One of Life's Experiences' published in *Firsts*.

Jeanette Temesvary

Tanka 'Offspring' published in *Luft* and recited, as part of a multi-discipline creative arts show initiative from Mounted ARI, featuring visual arts, creative writing and music, October 2023.

EASTWOOD-HILLS FAW

Erina Booker

Poem 'Space' published in *Burrow* e-journal #4
Poem 'Two Bears' published in *Burrow* e-journal #5

Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonzetti

A tanka published in *Eucalypt: a tanka journal* Issue 35.

Karen Liewersz

Debut novel, *With or Without Panties*, finalist in three categories of the Australian Romance Readers Awards 2023: Best Couple in a Romance, Best Banter in a Romance, and Best Romantic Comedy.

Weidong Tian

'The Last Paper Flower' first place Nov 2023 monthly assignment.

Debra Widdicombe

'Earthers, Lunars and Martians' [short story] Commended, June 2023 Assignment – Editing Your Work.

EUROBODALLA FAW

Judy Turner

Story, 'The Red Coat', published in the anthology *Firsts*, a collection of short stories about first-time experiences. Published by Kani Publishing.

FOREST FAW

Seetha Dodd

Second place in Jackie Hosking's annual competition for rhyming stories.

Margaret Zanardo

A new chapbook of twenty poems, *In a Heartbeat*, due to be published soon.

ISOLATED WRITERS

Pippa Kay

Two poems published in November *Quadrant*, 'Jacaranda' and 'Photo of a Boy in Flight'
Sestina called 'Marbles' Highly Commended at the Society of Women Writers Literary Awards for poetry

Poem, 'What is Colour?' Highly Commended for poetry and won the Wise Sage Prize in the Lane Cove Literary Awards for an author over 65

Short story, 'Invisible' published in *Seniors Stories* Vol.9.

Jenny England

Positive Words, equal first in Mini Competition

Sutherland Environmental Centre R H Walshe Writing Comp, Highly Commended

The Village Observer, Short stories 'The Mission' and 'The Music Box'

Kiama Bugle, Short stories 'A Perfect Christmas', 'The Interview' (Christmas issue) and 'Gotcha'.

Issy Jinarmo

[*Jill Baggett – Mudgee, Narelle Noppert – Wollondilly and Maureen Kelly OAM – Isolated Writers*]

'Camellia Close', *Otherwise Engaged Literary Journal*

'Moonlight Magic', *It's A Kind Of Magic Anthology*

'The Eye of the DI', *Anthology of detective stories*

'The Long Flight Home', *DoubleSpeak Magazine*

'Rachel', *CultureCult*

'Slow Drip of Water', *Lit eZine*

'Precious Possession', *DG Sentinel*

Interview with Katie Daniels, *MockingOwl Roost*

'Friendships With A Touch of Spice', *Tale*

'Fergie's Fishing Trip', *Tale*

'Secrets', *CultureCult*

LAKE MACQUARIE FAW

Sandra Boyd

Edited and Published the *Life's Toolbox* anthology (as Sandra Joy). Book 1: *Firsts* 'The Pressure of a Name'; 'That Night'. Book 2: *Pets and Pests* 'Flies are a Pest'; 'Rio's Adventure'; 'No More Bloodshed'. Book 3: *Silent Train Wrecks*: 'The Case Against Short Platforms'; 'Tosser Child'.

Maggie Rose Carr

Life's Toolbox anthology. Book 1: *Firsts*: 'Shake up for a Rookie Cop'; 'Struggle in the Darkness'.

Pam Garfoot

Life's Toolbox anthology. Book 3: *Silent Train Wrecks*: 'The Ghost of one Christmas Past'; 'Train of Thought'

Won the 2023 Journal Article of the Year Award for article 'A droving story' (published in *Queensland Family Historian* in Nov 2023)

Shortlisted in the *Newcastle Herald* Short Story Competition, story 'Oh Bill!'.

Olga Korlevic

Published a book of children's illustrations *The art gallery of dreams: Not what you think*.

John Franks

Life's Toolbox anthology. Book 1: *Firsts* 'Date Gone Wrong'; 'The Place we Call Home'; 'Pharaoh's Dream'; 'Tone, A Musical Memoir'. Book 2: *Pets and Pests*: 'Detroit Memoir'.

Book 3: *Silent Train Wrecks*: ‘One Summer’s Day’; ‘Trains and Tribulations’.

George Graves

Life’s Toolbox anthology. Book 1: *Firsts* ‘More than a Painting’. Book 2: *Pets and Pests* ‘A Discourse about a Horse’.

George Graves (as Geoff Gibbson)

Life’s Toolbox anthology. Book 1: *Firsts* ‘A Friend’; ‘Oops!’.

Tony Lang

Life’s Toolbox anthology. Book 1: *Firsts* ‘Forbidden Love’; ‘First News – Worse News’; ‘My Worst Ever Christmas Present’; ‘Rosemary’s First Outing’. Book 2: *Pets and Pests* ‘Henry and the House Fly’; ‘Cat’. Book 3: *Silent Train Wrecks* ‘Wedding Plans’; ‘Trains and Bridges’; ‘Mysterious Central Railway Station, Sydney’; ‘The Granny Dumpers’; ‘A Tale of Two Trains’.

Kristen Mair

Shortlisted in the *Newcastle Herald* Short Story Competition 2024, story ‘Splat’.

Bronwyn MacRitchie

Life’s Toolbox anthology. Book 1: *Firsts* ‘Foiled’ Book 3: *Silent Train Wrecks* ‘Buckle Up’.

Awarded Highly Commended in the 2023 Odyssey House Short Story Competition, short story ‘Possibilities’

Shortlisted in the *Newcastle Herald* Short Story Competition 2024, story ‘Shoreline show’.

Jan Mitchell

Life’s Toolbox anthology. Book 1: *Firsts* ‘Rewriting a Life’. Book 2: *Pets and Pests* ‘Sascha’s Bird’; ‘Cats for my Sons’; ‘The Queen of Cats’; ‘Cats in my life’. Book 3: *Silent Train Wrecks* ‘Clown Face’

Joan McCarthy

Life’s Toolbox anthology. Book 2: *Pets and Pests* ‘For the Love of Dogs’; ‘A Love Letter to Harry’.

Cate Plink (as Cathrine Marshall)

Life’s Toolbox anthology. Book 2: *Pets and Pests* ‘From Tiger to Keats’. Book 3: *Silent Train Wrecks* ‘It’s all in the Planning (or not)’. Book 3: *Silent Train Wrecks* ‘A Brush with Priscilla’ Launched at the National Dance Studio, novel for children, *Jacinta in the Mirror*.

Black Crow Walking

Life’s Toolbox anthology. Book 1: *Firsts* ‘French Doors and Red Curls’. Book 2: *Pets and Pests* ‘Life on the Farm with Sally’

Three poems published in *Poetry at the Pub* anthology. ‘Stardust After all’.

Ned Stephenson

Winner of the Stringybark Erotic Short Story Competition with his story, ‘The Blue Dragon’.

MACARTHUR FAW

Miriam Skerra

Completed a workshop in late November with Authors Publish Canada, which involved writing a poem every single day for an entire month.

Rodney Hunter

Won the November, Macarthur FAW, 1000-word short story competition, on the theme of conservation, with a story called ‘Lantana Mountain’.

MOOCOBOOLA FAW

Elizabeth Hamlin

Story, ‘First day on the job’, *Positive Words* Nov. 2023

Margaret Rumbold

Story, ‘On the move’, *Positive Words* Nov. 2023

Mary Bramston

Story, ‘A helping hand’, *Positive Words* Jan. 2024

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS FAW

Kaye Christensen

Poem, ‘The Poet sent me Googling’, WV #282

Jackie Laing

Poem, ‘The Painting Job’, WV #281

Ian Keast

Poem, ‘Riverwalk, Laurieton’, (Commended, *Studio* Competition, 2023). Published in *Studio*, Number 159, 2023

Two poems, ‘On the ball’ and ‘Front row delight’ – both published in *Studio*, Number 159, 2023

Three poems, ‘A Bunyah journey and Les Murray’s Wastepaper Basket’, ‘Traveller’ and ‘The long haul’ published in, *Journeys* (2023 Anthology, Poetica Christi Press, Melbourne.)

Book Review, ‘In Focus’, (a review of Sue Cook’s poetry) published in *Studio*, Number 159, 2023.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS FAW

Lorraine James

Tanka published in *Eucalypt* Magazine November 2023

Greg Tome

Poem, ‘Deities’ published in *Writers Voice* December 2023

Greg Baker

‘No one ever did that’ drabble published in *Writers Voice* December 2023

Dave Gorman

Has been accepted into the Faber Writing Academy to write his novel.

STROUD WRITERS FAW

Anne Andrews

Launched her poetry anthology *Fantastic* at an Author Event at Gloucester Library in December 2023.

Elizabeth Bradhurst

Contributed a research article to Hornsby Shire Historical Society’s bi-annual journal, *Local Colour*. This issue looked at schools established in the shire from 1922 to the present Prepared the Friends of St John’s Stroud newsletter featuring articles on celebrations for the church’s 190th anniversary.

Literary Achievements

SUTHERLAND SHIRE

[Some of the Sutherland member achievements here were overlooked in the December edition of *Writers Voice*. Apologies to those members—Ed].

Helen Armstrong

Edited Oatley Writers Group Anthology, *The Apartment*.
Co-editor of *A Fork in the Road*, FAW Sutherland Branch's anthology

Read her story and Sylvia's story at the Book Launch held at Miranda RSL on 10 February.

Antoinette Conolly

Published a story in the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

Peter Deady

Published a story in the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

Sal Gallaher

Second article published on Medium on the Writing Co-op. *NanoWrMo*, *Writing for publication*

Read her story at the launch of *A Fork in the Road* at Miranda RSL on 10 February

Appointed editor of a new publication with Medium.

Joe Green

Artwork, Oatley 101 Art Society, Highly Commended

Published a story in the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

David Harris

'Nature and Love' published in *Resident Life Story*, John Paul Village, 2023, and in *Heathcote News*.

Kirsty Jagger

Her novel, *Roseghetto*, published in July by University of Queensland Press

Interviewed in *Women's Agenda*, *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, 'Kill Your Darlings'

Book reviewed by *The Newtown Review of Books*, *Writing Western Sydney*, Readings.

Fiona Johnstone

Master of Ceremonies at the Oatley Writers Group book launch on 17 November at Oatley RSL

Published a story in the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

Frank Maguire

Kareela Historical Society, writing and editing historical document

Published two stories in the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

Karina McDougall

Published a story in the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

Dinuka McKenzie

Panel member at the Bad Sydney Crime Writing Festival in early November at the State Library of NSW

Her new novel, *Tipping Point*, published by Harper Collins, the third of the crime series with Detective Kate Miles.

Julianne Miles-Brown

MC at the FAW Sutherland anthology launch at Miranda RSL held on 10 February.

Co-editor and contributor to the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

Robey Piggott

Completed *Poetics in Place*, Writing NSW course

Published a story in the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

Patricia Ruell

Published two stories in the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

Christine Sykes

South Coast Writers Centre anthology, story published Anthology launch and read story at Coledale Community Centre, November. They are producing the anthology in published form and online digital with sound

Book talks at Dubbo, Narromine, Coolah, Mudgee libraries

Memoir Writing workshop with Wollongong and Corrimal Libraries

Published a story and a poem in the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.

Sylvia Vago

Read an extract of her short story, 'Tokyo Apartment' at the book launch of Oatley Writers Group anthology at Oatley RSL on 17 November.

Co-editor and contributor to the FAW Sutherland anthology, *A fork in the Road*.



NOT SO HARD

'Not so hard. Not so hard.'

I am shouting but he's taking no notice.

I shout again but he ignores me, foot hard on the accelerator.

Resignation flows over me.

I'm going to die and not of old age, but soon, soon on this road winding around the mountainside.

A bus appears in front, its taillights red in the dark.

He rushes on, overtakes the bus on a blind corner, the car millimetres from the edge on one side, the bus on the other.

At last we're past. I'm still alive.

And I realise he can only speak Chinese.

Greg Baker, Southern Highlands FAW

Short Stories

Trade Fair/Feria

cont. from previous page

During the next two days, at the Trade Exhibition Centre, Mariana and Lola and Sophie worked on setting up their exhibition stand, which, once completed, looked very lovely. Then on the third day the Feria opened and buyers crowded in. Mariana's family also crowded in. Seven people turned up and Mariana's father-in-law immediately pushed her off her chair at the desk and took over. He ostentatiously looked at papers, collected sales figures, added them up continuously on a little desk calculator, self-importantly wrote things down on a big pad and gave loud instructions to everyone, all of whom hung around the stand taking up valuable customer space. Sophie spent the entire three days of the Trade Fair walking round looking at the other exhibits. There was no room for her on the stand and all the family gabbled away in Spanish completely ignoring her. The relief when the Feria closed was immense.

And so here she was on this interminable drive back to Barcelona and, at last, safely delivered after dark to her hotel. Her flight the next day was in the evening. It was a hot sunny day so, wearing a shady hat she set off along Las Ramblas, her destination a Matisse Exhibition down towards the port area. She hadn't eaten breakfast so along the way she plucked up courage to order something at a café. It was delivered to a table outside and once she had eaten, she checked her wallet. She had paid with cash at the time of ordering and the conversion to what seemed like thousands of pesetas was confusing. Whatever! It was clear she had been ripped off. She was so angry that she forced herself back inside the cafe to query the transaction. The same man behind the till was defiant and aggressive but as she started to make a fuss despite her lack of Spanish, finally, without another word, he opened up the till and handed her back a wad of notes.

Continuing along Las Ramblas she eventually entered the old part of the city, full of narrow alleyways. These were residential buildings. Above her washing hung on poles and what seemed like a thousand little bird cages issued from every window, each with a bird trilling away. It was utterly touching but it also made her feel sad that these beautiful little creatures lived their lives in cages. Eventually she was outside the gallery.

'CERRADO' the sign on the door announced. What! And then it dawned on her. It was Monday. She stood there for a moment feeling absolutely furious. This was just a further illustration of a thoroughly rotten trip. And then a voice said:

'Well darn me! It's closed!' and she turned to find a tall black man standing beside her staring at the sign. His skin was so black that it shone. His accent was American.

'What the hell will I do now?' he said, more as a reflective comment than one to her.

Sophie said 'Yes. What a disappointment. I'm totally brassed off. I'd forgotten completely about the fact that galleries are generally closed on Mondays. But on the way I discovered the most beautiful little church down a side alley. You might like to take a look at that.'

The guy said he would and so they set off together. He was a professor of something very intellectual and had arrived in Barcelona the day prior. He was going to teach at one of the universities. He was very courteous, very articulate and very friendly. They got on famously so in the end they both agreed they wanted to see the Sagrada Familia – Gaudi's amazing unfinished cathedral. And so they went together.

After their companionable day of sightseeing the man escorted Sophie back to her hotel. She had booked the honest taxi driver to take her to the airport and so she was eventually, almost weeping with relief, safely seated on the plane waiting for take-off.

'Good evening ladies and gentlemen. My name is John Farringdon-Brown and I, on behalf of your pilot Captain Stuart and the crew are happy to welcome you on board BEA 116 to London.'

'On ya John.' Sophie whispered. She laid her head against the headrest and dozed off.

□

Rainforest Dreams

Gillian Macnamara

YET ANOTHER hairpin bend. She changes down from third to second, slowing a bit late, and feels the ancient Mazda slide then right itself. Through the open windows she smells dank rainforest. The air is cooler here. Tall ferns fringe the road; taller trees bow to meet overhead, letting in puddles of light. She squints ahead: shadows look like potholes and potholes mimic shadows. A break in the trees signals the turning on to an even worse dirt road. She pats the dashboard. 'Well done, old lady. Nearly there.'

'Remember to watch out for wombats,' he'd said. She drives slowly, the car following deep ruts. And there it is: an ugly, dark-brick house, built on the cheap, under the escarpment and on the edge of a private slice of rainforest.

After hours of traffic noise and radio chatter, then the whining of an overtaxed engine, the absence of noise is like a physical assault. She stands still while her ears adjust to silence.

No, not silence ... She tunes in to the tiny sounds of the bush. Leaves shift and sigh in the smallest gasp of a breeze. Some small bird – a finch perhaps – peeps twice then stops. Far away, on the flat farmland below, a dog barks.

By the front door, as promised, squats a chunk of granite. She nudges it with a stick, wary of lurking creatures. Nothing. Just the key. The house has been empty for six days but already smells neglected, damp. She slides open windows and doors then goes out again to the car. It takes two trips to ferry food, clothes and an optimistically large pile of marking from car to house. 'Don't forget to put food in containers or in the fridge,' he'd said, 'in case of wildlife.'

The kitchen tap turns on with a thunk. She fills a glass with cool water, grimacing at the brackish smell. There was a dead possum in the tank a while ago, apparently. But 'all good now,' he'd said. Maybe she'll boil the water, just in case ...

She has been here a few times; first, when he and his wife lived here together; later, after his wife left, when he lived here alone. Mostly alone. Her mind veers away – no point in going back over it all. She had learned important lessons, but none that she needs to review. So, now ... her first time staying here alone, with just the bush for company. And she realises – surprising herself with the intensity of her relief – that being here alone is very, very good.

She wonders whether the lyrebirds are still around. They display in the bush around the house. Not in summer, though. She remembers a frigid winter morning, the two of them sitting silent on a mossy log, waiting; she recalls wishing for long johns under her jeans and wondering whether it was, as he promised, too cold for leeches. Then a crashing among the undergrowth and a warning hand on her thigh, though she had not moved. A male Superb Lyrebird jumped on to a neighbouring log, shivered his feathers in preparation and gave a performance that held her motionless: throwing his magnificent tail up and over his head, he was a Pied Currawong, a Kookaburra, a Whipbird, a dozen more whose calls she didn't recognise, then a chainsaw and – my God! Mozart? – all tumbling forth without a pause. That memory brings a smile.

She considers her choice of bedroom: the small back room looks out on a water tank, a log pile and lichen-

encrusted rocks; the big room upstairs holds memories but looks out over trees. Climbing the narrow staircase, she throws her bags in a corner and makes up the bed.

By nine o'clock she has eaten the chicken salad brought from home, wrestled with the gas hob and the ancient pot to produce a passable coffee, showered in warm, smelly water, fallen into bed and – despite the caffeine – is asleep within minutes.

From deep sleep to wakefulness in a moment. A clock glows green on the bedside table. 3:15. Why is she awake? The answer comes from above her head. Fingernails on a blackboard? No. Claws on metal. On the roof? Yes, not inside. She lies still and listens. Scuttling, scratching, scuffling and an occasional thud. It sounds huge. Get a grip! What can it be? She lists the nocturnal creatures that live here. Nothing the size of a crocodile. Obviously. A thousand or so kilometres too far south. And, as far as she knows, they are not usually roof dwellers. She listens to the creature's erratic progress across the roof while she runs through possible points of entry to the house. All windows and doors are open but fly screens are intact – she has checked. Irrational fear fights with logical thought, until fatigue takes over.

The dream is even more nonsensical than usual: she sits on the roof, watching the moon, chatting to a giant reptile – yes, OK, a crocodile – who introduces himself as Clarence. The croc reclines beside her, tapping red stilettos against the gutter while explaining that he prefers to sleep here because he is frightened of wombats. In the morning, she takes her breakfast outside. The dew-damp grass around the house is devoid of animal prints, large or small. Sun breaks through and the pile of marking is untouched. Instead, she wanders, snacks, reads, wanders further, snacks again. Inexplicably, she needs another early night.

When she wakes, the green numerals glow 2.12. Not a clod-hopping rooftop explorer this time, but a familiar sound from the water tank. A loud staccato screeching that she has heard before, a Peron's Tree Frog. He – it is always a 'he' – is using the half-empty water tank as an echo chamber. This will go on for a while ...

She turns over and sleeps again, to dream, not of crocodiles in unsuitable footwear this time, but of frogs turning into princes. And princes into frogs.



Bookshelf

VERA ZEGARAC

Fortuna

FORTUNA is a story of a woman's journey searching for herself and true love.

Carla, a 27-year-old archaeologist drifts through life under the stern gaze of her ever-controlling mother. She is lonely and fears she will never find love. Then she meets Eric, a successful lawyer, twelve years her senior. They fall in love and marry, and everything feels great. However, their marriage suffers when they learn that Carla cannot bear children. Seeking space, she travels to Turkey to lead an archaeological dig. Returning home, she faces betrayal, loss, and a long-hidden family secret.

ISBN-978-0648202424. Price: \$28.85 paperback, \$4.11 e-book. Distributed by Amazon.

KAREN LIEVERSZ

With or Without Trust

Detective Sergeant Greg Anderson has never been one for following the rules. But even he knows it would be a mistake to give in to the fiery chemistry between him and the cute, young intelligence analyst, Emily Saunders. That is until Greg finds himself caring for a homeless man's dog. He asks Emily for help, and it isn't long before they're both ignoring the rules. When a long-running drug investigation becomes unexpectedly personal, Emily is forced to make a difficult decision. One that will force her and Greg to choose what's more important: love or pride.

This steamy workplace romance will be available on Amazon in E-Book and Paperback format from 19th March 2024.

WENDELL WATT

Tomorrow We May Walk on Clouds

This is a collection of poems which take inspiration from the natural world and reflect on a range of life experiences and the humorous absurdities that crop up along the way.

Published by Ginninderra Press, recommended retail price \$22.50. Available online from Ginninderra Press, Amazon and Thriftbooks.

CATHRINE MARSHALL *Jacinta in the Mirror*

This book is the first of THE DANCER series for 8-12 year-old readers. A pre-release print run just for locals was launched at the National College of Dance, Newcastle on 14 November (full release February 2024). Author Cathrine Marshall (Cate Plink) spoke about her book in between actual performances by dancers from the National Dance Studio, with entertainment by the talented Shane Edwards.

PAM GARFOOT

Capricorn Drover

In 1878, when western Queensland was still frontier territory, an epic droving trip was made from east to west across the colony. *Capricorn Drover* tells the story of this journey through the eyes of an ordinary drover, Edward Talbot, and is based on the diary he kept for almost the whole of the trip. He was a member of that romantic group, long distance drovers or overlanders, pioneering the Queensland pastoral industry. They faced many adversities on the trip: scarcity of water and food, flooding rains and accidents.

There were also potential dangers and fears such as stampedes and attacks by hostile Aborigines. RRP \$30.95. www.digitalprintaustralia.com/bookstore/non-fiction/historical/capricorn-drover.html

BLUE MOUNTAINS FAW

Blue Mountains Alchemy: Turning Words into Gold

This is the 18th anthology produced by Blue Mountains branch. It contains a wide variety of flash fiction, short stories and poetry about bushfires, jazz clubs, secret lives of cats, lockdowns and philosophy. The full history of the branch and list of publications is also included. The book is available for purchase at The Turning Page Bookshop, Springwood or by contacting Blue Mountains branch (see contact details next page). It can also be borrowed from the Blue Mountains Library.

M.R.MORTIMER

Finding Horses: Maia's Adventure Down The Mountain

The year is 2170. The place is Sydney, Australia. Civilization? It's over. The city is mostly abandoned. Gangs and warlords control the lawless streets. Scattered militia groups struggle to maintain some semblance of peace in the region, for the safety of those few who seek to trade between settlements of survivors. Maia finds herself here against her will, and she only wants to go home to the mountains. Publisher: Amenti Books. Available at all online retailers in paperback \$24.95 or on Amazon kindle \$3.99. ISBN: 9780648232087.

FAYE W OWEN

Is Anybody There?

Poems of Faith. Faye Owen, writer, artist violinist and long-time resident of the Camden Haven, has published her long-awaited first book of poetry. Faye has written well over 500 poems in many styles and genres, and has won a number of major poetry prizes over the years.

This book is a selection of 184 poems of faith, which she has illustrated with 75 black pen drawings. The cost is \$30 from the author Faye Owen, ph. 6559 7622 (if posted, add \$12.50).

FAW members:

Send details of your recently published books to wveditor@fawnsw.org.au

TASMANIA FELLOWSHIP OF AUST.

WRITERS

The World According to Us

The FAWN (Fellowship of Australian Writers–North West) has published its fourth anthology of short stories and poems. This 2023 edition, *The World According to Us* is the group's most extensive anthology to date, with 112 member contributions occupying 328 pages. FAW NSW members are offered the chance to purchase copies of this anthology at the special price of \$20 per copy plus \$12 postage. Contact Allan Jamieson, PO Box 608, BURNIE TAS 7320; phone 03-6432-3672 or email jamtin79@gmail.com.

CANBERRA & REGION FAW *Faces, Places, Spaces*

The genesis of this Anthology was the excitement FAW members in Canberra expressed as they listened to the homework and writing exercises completed by their fellow members in the years 2021 and 2022 at our regular monthly meeting. Many shared works were very readable and enjoyable; they form the basis of this anthology.

Faces, Places and Spaces is a sample of the diversity of the work our members create. In March 2023 we adopted 'Find yourself through writing' as our group's mission statement. Published October 2023, soft cover. \$19.99 plus \$5.00 postage and handling. Contact: Diane Porter, email porter.32@bigpond.com

MAVIS GUNTER

Web of Words

If you enjoy short stories, poetry and thought-provoking bits & pieces, humour, sadness, happiness, haiku and limericks, you will enjoy this compilation in the *Web of Words*. A few hours of pleasant entertainment. Available for \$10 from the author Mavis Gunter, Phone 02 43 581353.

JULIE THORNDYKE

Alice's Shoe

Illustrated by Jennifer Harrison.

A country child, Alice ran barefoot. On smooth waxed floorboards, over dusty clay in the yard, through icy water in the creek...she refused to wear shoes. After losing her sight and hearing through illness, Alice found her way to language through tactile signing, becoming known as 'Australia's Helen Keller'. Published by MidnightSun Publishing.

ISBN 978 1922 858 139. \$29.99. Pre-order through Dymock's online. Visit the author's website juliehorndyke.com/alices-shoe.

Branch Meetings and Contacts

BLUE MOUNTAINS FAW

1st Sunday – 1.45 to 4.45 pm

Springwood Sports Club
Enquiries: Jeanette Temesvary
Phone: 0423 908 199
91 Buena Vista Rd, Winmalee 2777
Email: temesvary.jns@gmail.com
Facebook page:
Blue Mountains Writers FAW

CANBERRA & REGION FAW

Second Sunday – 2:00 pm

The National Library of Australia
(Friends' Room)
Parkes Place West, Canberra. ACT.
Enquiries: Dianne Porter (Pres.)
Email: porter.32@bigpond.com
Phone: 0428 138 503

EASTWOOD/HILLS FAW

1st Saturday – 1.30 pm

Pennant Hills Community Centre,
Cnr Yarrara & Ramsay Rds,
Pennant Hills
Enquiries: Frances Moon (Pres.)
Email: riaraebeam@gmail.com
or Laura Davis (Sec.) Email:
lauraceedee@yahoo.com.au
Web: hillsfaw.wordpress.com

EUROBODALLA FAW

1st Wednesday – 10.30 to 2pm

The Red Door Anglican Church Hall
Page St, Moruya
Enquiries: Rosie Toth 0437 627 756
Email: rosieto102@gmail.com

Night group:

1st Monday – 6.30pm to 8.30 pm
Various homes.
Enquiries: Karen Kentwell
Karen2Kentwell@gmail.com
0406 377 148

FOREST FAW

3rd Saturday – 2.00 pm

Forest Community Arts Centre
Darley Street, Forestville.
Enquiries: Heleni Sutton
0414 964 336. Email:
hlnsttn@yahoo.com.au

GOULBURN FAW

Third Wednesday – 10:30am
to 12:30pm

Meeting Room, Mulwaree Library
194 Bourke St, Goulburn.
Enquiries: Janice Jensen (Sec)
Email: yens3580@gmail.com

GRIFFITH RIVERINA FAW

Last Thursday – 6.30pm

Griffith Community Centre
1 Olympic Street, Griffith
Enquiries: Caroline Tuohey
Phone: 0428 675 743

HUNTER FAW

1st Wednesday – 10.00 am

Hudson Room of Sydney Junction
Hotel, Beaumont St., Hamilton
Enquiries: Christine Brotherson
(Sec.) 0412 030 427

ISOLATED WRITERS FAW

This group of writers do not meet
in person but keep in contact
through Carolyn Cash, their
Convenor, either through the state
FAW website fawns.org.au or
isolatedwriters@fawns.org.au
(See *Isolated Writers page (back cover)*)

LAKE MACQUARIE FAW

2nd Saturday – 2.30 to 4.30pm

Toronto Multi-Purpose Centre,
9 Thorne Street, Toronto.
Enquiries:
lakemacfaw2@gmail.com
Facebook: /LakeMacFAW
Web:
lakemacfaw2.wordpress.com
X formerly Twitter: [@lakemacfaw2](https://twitter.com/lakemacfaw2)
Instagram: [#lakemacfaw2](https://www.instagram.com/lakemacfaw2)

LAMBING FLAT YOUNG FAW

2nd Monday – 5.30 to 7.30pm

(Except December and January)
The Young Services Club
Cloete Street, Young
Enquiries: Maree Myhill (Pres)
Phone: 0427 017 884 or
02 6382 3640
Email: lambingflatbranchfaw@hotmail.com

MACARTHUR FAW

3rd Sunday – 1.00 pm

Campbelltown RSL Club
(Jade Room), Carberry Lane.
Enquiries: Victoria Chie 4862 2771
Email: vchie46@bigpond.com

MOOCOBOOLA FAW

3rd Thursday – 1.30 pm

Gladesville Library
Pittwater Road, Gladesville.
Enquiries: Robert Dickins
9713 8048
Dai Fei Yang 0422 432 130

MUDGEY VALLEY WRITERS FAW

1st Monday – 1.00 to 3.00 pm

[Note change of date and time]
Enquiries: Jill Baggett
0409 609 869
Web: mudgeevalleywriters.wordpress.com

PARRAMATTA FAW

1st Saturday – 12.30 to 3.00pm

5 Phive, Parramatta Square,
Parramatta
Enquiries: Cecilie McCarron (Sec.)
Email: qsteps15@gmail.com

PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS FAW

Last Saturday – 1.00 to 4.00pm

121 Bridge Street, Port Macquarie
Enquiries:
Ian Keast (Pres.) 0437 006 202
PO Box 67 Port Macquarie 2444
Email: iankeast74@gmail.com

PORT STEPHENS FAW

3rd Thursday – 10.00 am

Tomaree Library, Salamander Bay
Enquiries: Susan Bowen (Pres)
0410 002 828
Email: susanbowencreative@gmail.com
Web: portstephensfoaw.wordpress.com

REVESBY WRITERS FAW

1st Saturday – 1.00 to 4.00pm

Macarthur Room,
Dixon Lane, Revesby
Enquiries: Shirley Galloway
9709 4117. Email:
revesbywriters@gmail.com
Web: revesbywriters.com

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

2nd Saturday – 10.00am to 1pm

(Except January)
Welby Hall, Welby.
Enquiries: Uta Purcell (Sec.)
02 4862 1793
Email: fawshnsw@hotmail.com
Web: fawsh.wordpress.com

STROUD WRITERS FAW

Fortnightly Thursdays

9.00 am to 12 noon

Stroud Library, Church Lane Stroud
Enquiries:
Dianne Foster 0429 487 601
Email: stroudwriters@gmail.com

We list on this page, our branches and their contact details for members, visitors and writers keen to meet with other writers for support, critique and to develop skills. New members are particularly welcome.

PLEASE NOTE: Dates and times shown are for 'normal' scheduled meetings. Should 'Stay at Home' orders be in place in your area, meetings may be held via video conferencing, by email, via the branch blog, or not at all. Please contact your branch for up to date information.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE FAW

Last Saturday – 12.30 to 3.30pm

Sutherland Multi-purpose Centre
123 Flora Street, Sutherland
Enquiries: Sylvia Vago (Sec.)
0402 016 883
Email: sutherlandshirefaw@gmail.com
Web: www.writersunleashed.com.au/faw-meetings

SYDNEY CITY FAW

3rd Friday – 4.00 pm

Sydney Mechanics School of Arts,
1st Floor, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney
(close to Town Hall Station,
light rail and buses).
Open to all writers, all genres.
Enquiries: Pip 0406 627 855,
Colleen touchstoneten@gmail.com,
or John 02 8920 8690.

WOLLONDILLY FAW

2nd Sunday – 1.00 pm

Bonnie House,
122 Hawthorne Road, Bargo.
Enquiries: Jean Mills (Pres.)
0427 213 300
wollondillybranch.faw@gmail.com

WYONG WRITERS FAW

4th Saturday – 1.30pm

Woodbury Park Community Centre
1 Woolmers Cres. (off Woodbury
Park Drive), Mardi. Enquiries:
Mei-Ling Venning (Pres.)
4333 7489
85 Oaks Road, Shelly Beach 2261
meilingvenning@hotmail.com
Web: www.wyongwriters.org

*This page has been updated
as at 15 February 2024—Ed.*

FAW ISOLATED WRITERS BRANCH

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES:

Carolyn Cash, Isolated Writers Convenor
Email: isolatedwriters@fawnsw.org.au

ASSISTING THE CONVENOR:

Jenny England
Email: jennyengland60@gmail.com
02 9059 0368.

Jill Schuler
Email: jillschuler9@gmail.com
Mobile: 0467 677 764.

MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Editor, Writers Voice
28/100 Government Road,
Wyee Point NSW 2259
Email: wveditor@fawnsw.org.au

AFFILIATION FEES:

FAW NSW Affiliation Fees are due 31 December yearly...

Isolated Writers: \$40.00 pa
Under 21/Youth Rate: \$20.00 pa
Overseas Members: \$51.00 pa

Mail subscriptions to the FAW State Treasurer Rick Watkins (*see page 2 for address*).

Make cheques/money orders payable to Fellowship of Australian Writers and enclose SSAE for receipt if required.

At the same time, please advise the Membership Registrar, Liz Shaw, that you have paid. Email: fawmembership@fawnsw.org.au. This will ensure that you are included on the mailing list to receive *Writers Voice*.

ELECTRONIC ROUND ROBIN (ERR):

The ERR is currently on hold, following the recent passing of coordinator Brian Armour.

Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW Inc.

ABN 59 557 152 715



General correspondence: Hon. Secretary, FAW NSW Inc.
3/91 Main Road, McLaren Vale SA 5171

Email: honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au

Internet: www.fawnsw.org.au

ABOUT THE FAW

The aims of the FAW are:

- to foster and endorse the growth of Australian writing
- to promote excellence in writing
- to encourage writers, and those interested in writing, to join the Fellowship and enjoy the support, help and knowledge of members
- to expand the Fellowship across the State
- to provide an organisation to assist writers unable to attend Branch meetings
- to take the Fellowship into the 21st century and take advantage of technology and its new role in writing and publishing.

Branch Meetings

The branch fellowships hold regular meetings; conduct workshops and tutorials; hold writing competitions and publish anthologies of members' work. Visitors are most welcome to attend meetings or to contact the Fellowship through their respective branch (see previous page) or by contacting the FAW NSW State body (as above).

INTERSTATE BRANCHES

Tasmania:

Fellowship of Australian Writers (TAS) Inc.
PO Box 234, North Hobart TAS 7002
www.fawtas.org.au

Western Australia (FAWWA):

Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) Inc.
PO Box 6180, Swanbourne WA 6910
www.fawwa.org

Queensland (FAWQ):

Fellowship of Australian Writers Queensland (FAWQ)
www.fawq.com.au



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