

A background of vibrant autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and red, with some leaves in sharp focus and others blurred. The text is overlaid on this background.

Women's

Ink!

Autumn 2021

The Society of Women Writers NSW Inc.
www.womenwritersnsw.org

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Editor's Message

I grew up playing Scrabble in a home where Scrabble rules were followed precisely, so alongside the board and tile bag was always our hardback navy Complete Oxford English Dictionary, published in 1964. Any disputes over a word, and the dictionary had the last one. The dictionary held the record of true words and true meanings. When it came to Scrabble, the dictionary was finite and resolute.

Only when new possessions slipped into our home (a microwave, a video recorder, my first Walkman) did I discover that new words could be added to a dictionary, and established words could take on different meanings.

The dictionary is not finite, of course, nor the authoritarian I had believed it to be. Language is dynamic and it advances along with the inevitable march of time.

At the end of last year, Oxford Languages reported that the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic have brought about an 'unusual pace of linguistic change', and for the first time since 2004, when their 'Word of the Year' tradition began, they concluded 'this is a year which cannot be neatly accommodated in one single word'.

Covid-19 has infected our language as it has our lives. Social distancing. quarantine. self-isolation. We endured an unprecedented use of the word unprecedented. Pivot is applied as a panacea for struggling businesses during the pandemic. And of course, there's lockdown.

And it was while people were in lockdown that old Scrabble boards re-emerged and sales of new Scrabble sets skyrocketed. In the UK, sales of boardgames and jigsaws increased by 240% and Scrabble, a game launched in 1949, sold out online. In the midst of a year which no single word could define, millions of people took comfort in making as many words as they could.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Women's Ink!* which captures our words in this time.

Jacqui

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President's Message

BY JAN CONWAY

After a tumultuous 2020, Autumn heralds change. The Society too will see some changes in 2021. I'm delighted to say we had a successful and safe return to the Mitchell Library's Dixson Room in February. Despite being seated well apart, excitement was palpable in the air and a happy group celebrated the achievements of members who were recognized for their award winning books and shared Ann Beaumont's joyful surprise at being announced the winner of the Di Yerbury Residency. Congratulations to all our winners whose names you will find within these pages. For their support of the Society of Women Writers NSW, I thank Judith O'Connor, Carolyn Beaumont, Margaret Bradstock and Paul McDonald for their excellent work in judging the books and Sharon Rundle and Colleen Keating for the Di Yerbury Residency.

Our monthly Literary events will return to the Dixson Room on the second Wednesday of each month but there will be changes. Until further notice, they will be held theatre-style which means lunch will not be served. Changed hours at the library also mean some alteration to our programme. The workshop will run from 10.15 am to 12.00 noon with a 45-minute lunch break for those staying for the afternoon Literary Event which will commence at 12.45 and close at 2.30 pm.

This month we welcome Professor Emerita Elizabeth Webby who will present this year's Abbie Clancy Award and Jo Oliver as workshop presenter and Keynote speaker. The National Writers Competition and the Writers' Grant open, a regional get together will be held at Berrima and a writing retreat is announced.

The Spring/Summer 2020 edition of Women's Ink! was well received. This Autumn 2021 edition continues the changed format of the magazine with its emphasis on writers and all things writing. Our e-newsletter will continue to inform us about Society and member news: what's on at the Society, book reviews and launches, upcoming competitions and much more.

As writers we share a passion for the craft. Zoom served us well during the pandemic. To support and include those who live outside Sydney or those who find it difficult to travel to the city, we will stream our monthly speaker events. What makes the Society's live events special are the faces in the room, the exchange of ideas, the support offered and the friendships formed. I look forward to enjoying the year ahead with you. 8 March is International Women's Day and I share the words of an extraordinary young woman.

One child, one teacher, one pen, and one book can change the world.
Malala Yousafzai

Jan Conway



Jan Conway
President

Biennial National Writing Competition

for
FICTION
NON-FICTION
and
POETRY

open to both members
and non-members

Entries open 10 March 2021
Entries close 30 June 2021

Fiction: maximum 3000 words
Non-Fiction: maximum 3000 words
Poetry: Maximum 80 lines per poem

2021 Member Writer's Grant

This biennial Writer's Grant will support one winner to attend eight SWW Workshops and three Literary Luncheon Meetings held by the Society of Women Writers NSW, at the State Library of NSW (or another venue if offered).

Entries open 10 March 2021
Entries close 3 July 2021

More details and entry forms are
available on our website
www.womenwritersnsw.org

Submissions Open

Your Magazine. Your Voice. We Need You!

Women's Ink! is a contemporary collection of women's voices in the form of articles, essays, interviews, Q&As, fiction, poetry, non-fiction, book reviews, commentary and more.

Women's Ink! showcases our members' writing and shares our members' voices.

Submissions for the
winter issue of
Women's Ink!
are now open.

From 100 words to 1000 words,
it's up to you!

Submission guidelines are
available on our website, or
email the editor for a copy at
jacqui.brown@panachecat.com



Submissions close
15 May 2021

The Neuroscience of Creativity

We Just Have To Remember What We Did

BY SUE WOOLFE



People often ask if you can learn to be creative, their tone implying that you can't.

Evidence points to the opposite: that what you've learned since you were five years old is to be non-creative, and that can be unlearned.

Many published studies have shown this. The best known experiment was done by George Land and Beth Jarman in 1968, which showed that whereas 5 year olds are 98% creative (to the point of what Land's Nasa test called "genius"), the same children tested at 12 years old were only 30% creative, and at 15 years, only 12%.

Land and Jarman went on to test nearly a million adults, and found them only 2% creative. They could only conclude that we learn as we grow up to be non-creative.

So how has this happened? Neuroscience over the past 50 years has shown that there are two distinct ways of thinking - not one, as our schooling and socialization insists. Creative thinking and analytical thinking are very different from each other. Schooling very effectively teaches us to think in both ways simultaneously, the creative way and

the analytical way, and gives us the sense that this is the only legitimate way to think. But, as Land and Jarman noted, that does great disservice to both ways of thought. The greater victim is creative thinking, so we learn to dismiss and feel ashamed of what we do naturally.

To put it simply, creativity vitally depends on accessing remote memories so they can be re-combined with other remote memories in an entirely new way, so that you can come up with something that was never put there in the first

place. However, schooling has taught us to tie our thinking to a purpose, to the here and now, to your self-image, as a sensible person, to an anticipated result, to what's predictable, to what's commonly

considered reasonable.

But the neurobiology of the imagination has been mapped enough to know that if you tie your thinking to anything, you simply, physiologically, cannot access those vital remote memories. You can only access immediate ones, and that's where

'For a creation to be so novel it challenges our expectations, it has to start somewhere that challenges even its creator. Somewhere that's not at all rational...'

your thinking will come to a halt. You'll only think ordinary thoughts.

Rationality is rightly regarded as the highpoint of human evolution. Science now knows that rationality takes place in the pre-frontal lobes - imagine it as just above your eyebrows. But paradoxically, though it's the highest point of our evolution, that's not where the world's great art, great music, great literature comes from. At least, that's not where it starts. And the start is all-important. As the creation gradually forms, there comes to be in the later stages a to-ing and fro-ing between the remote memories and the rationality we're so proud of evolving. But for a creation to be so novel it challenges our expectations, it has to start somewhere that challenges even its creator. Somewhere that's not at all rational. It has to start by accessing and combining those remote memories.

artistically successful students had already done, but come to me feeling that their creation was "illegitimately" made. Sometimes they've dashed out of their seats to hug me in relief when I tell them that the way they've thought has to be the artist's way.

In 1975 a researcher called Colin Martindale in a seminal, and often reproduced experiment found that creative people knew spontaneously, usually unconsciously, to do this. He found that they lulled their brain activity, perhaps only momentarily, and that allowed them to access much more of the brain, and come up with extraordinary ideas.

So creativity isn't a gift of the very few. What is true is that 2% of the population didn't unlearn it - why is another question, perhaps to be found in the idiosyncracies of personality. However, we all have uncanny moments, a fleeting, sad sense that in the colours and shapes of things, that there's a

'Neuroscience has told me how vital that idling, that lack of knowing, was. It's an unearthly stillness, the silence the mind enters into, when the creation truly begins.'

What's more, when we shut down the pre-frontal lobe and access these remote memories, neuroscience shows that we become unconsciously but subliminally alive to all sorts of stimuli, and take in an extraordinary amount of sensation that in their turn lay down in distant memories - so as artists, we're very rich in memories we don't know we have, but later on, we might feel that we're psychic, wondering how we 'knew' things we have no reason to know.

It's possible to half-create, as every creator knows. To go through the motions, to produce something that falls into a pattern. All artists who know their field well can do this, but then they miss out on the creative experience that we all, we artists, long for, and live for.

I've taught the skill of prising the two ways of thought apart to generations of playwrighting students at NIDA.

This is the sort of thinking that at NIDA, my

different way of seeing.

Creative thinking is seldom discussed, and I've constantly found that artists, after an initial reluctance, are relieved, even delighted to talk about it, and throw away every reserve! What's more, neuroscience gives us a language to use, and even tools to finally assess our creation, when it's safe to do so. Without a language, we're reduced to ecstatic looks, mystical talk, or to embarrassed grunts.

My first experience of the weirdness of creative thought was when I began my first novel. I'd long wanted to write a novel but I'd been taught that fiction authors knew before they started what they were going to write, and how they'd do it. No idea had ever come to me. (If you've been reading this, you'll realize that this was entirely the wrong way to go about creating).

Eventually, determinedly, I took time off work and travelled to a country where I knew no one and

shared no language with its people, so if I failed, I'd fail in secret. With nothing to do at last but write, I had no idea what to do. I sat on my rented bed twisting a pencil, my mind in idle. Neuroscience has told me how vital that idling, that lack of knowing, was. It's an unearthly stillness, the silence the mind enters into, when the creation truly begins.

In creative thinking, you learn to "wait upon" thought, rather than "wait for" a thought, to use the Heidegger distinction.

He constructed a dialogue between a Teacher, a Scholar and a Scientist:

Scientist: Yet if we wait we always wait for something.

Scholar: Certainly, but as soon as we represent to ourselves and fix upon that for which we wait, we really wait no longer.

Teacher: In waiting we leave open what we are waiting for.

Scholar: Why?

Teacher: Because waiting releases itself into openness.

Scholar: ...into the expanse of distance...

Teacher: ...into whose nearness it finds the abiding in which it remains.

Heidegger expressed a fear that the waiting upon style of thinking would be lost, and to some extent, his fears have been realized in our very purpose-driven world. The 'warfare of existence', as Joseph Conrad put it, has overwhelmed us, insisting that the creative thinking we're wired to do, with all its weirdness, purposelessness, and lack of financial reward is the thinking of fools, idiots, and losers.

So as I sat there, idling, knowing nothing, my mind began behaving in a most odd way. I'd had a vague notion that it might be useful to jot down memories, but my mind presented to me images that had never happened but which moved me to tears - tears over what was only made up! Fragments came to me, as if dictated, all apparently disconnected. I was compelled to keep writing by a strange and

preposterous conviction that I could hear the world weeping, and it might be my job to comfort it.

The conviction I felt has been noted by neuroscience scholars as part of the creating process - a passionate feeling that, though unverbalizable,



becomes a driving force so you must explore something urgent, though, again, you don't yet know what. And the fragments I wrote in, I found to my astonishment that they eventually weren't disconnected after all. After many remote memories are accessed, something happens which I'd describe as an avalanche, and then the work begins to 'talk back', take over from you, and form itself of its own accord, as long as you resist controlling it. Then you begin to see that the work is expressing who you

are, but didn't know, and wouldn't have known, but the creation knew, and led you there. So you find yourself, and define yourself anew, in your work.

In those days, I knew nothing about neuroscience. Intuition guided me.

But when I was embarking on my third novel, intuition abandoned me. The muse abandoned me. The starting of the writing happened to coincide with my enrolment for a doctorate. My second novel, *Leaning Toward Infinity*, had many readers who wrote to me, suddenly telling me that when I was writing, I wasn't just murmuring away to myself. What descended was not the muse, but writers' block. The university I'd enrolled in was expecting a novel, with a deadline of three years, that seemed unwriteable. In my desperation, I turned in every direction, then in desperation, to neuroscience. I already had intimations that neuroscience might say something of value that might free me; I'd recently been interviewed by Dr Christopher Stevens, a cognitive scientist who asked such penetrating questions about the way I think, that I found the interview spooky. It was as if he had been sitting on a cloud, like a cupid, but in my brain. For instance, he asked whether my thoughts when I write came in flurries, and if I felt an insight anywhere in my body, and what it felt like? Did it have a colour? When I asked how he knew to ask such penetrating, authentic things, his answer was his

bibliography, pages of names I'd never heard of then, but have now become my heroes. That was 18 years ago, and I've been sleuthing in the neuroscience of creativity ever since, for it informs not only my teaching, but my writing practise. Far from hindering me - often shocked fellow-writers tell me I'm doing myself great harm - it's been my comfort. For example, I'd began the third novel knowing too much. I had to humbly know nothing.

Try it at home: with meditation, teach yourself the basic skill of shutting down purpose, self-image, sensible thought, your wish

to anticipate and predict. If you go into a stillness, that allows a massive distribution of resources and energy to take place. Your mind, like a dog suddenly off the leash, can at last access remote memories. The thoughts that will come to you then are novel, unexpected, wild, weird, dangerous, and sometimes they'll shock you - for the pre-frontal lobes house our values and ideals- but the thoughts are undeniably original.

The neuroscience of creativity is a fascinating, fast-moving field. I've been teaching it to playwrights at NIDA for seven years, and now to musicians and composers at ANU. An experiment with a battery of 22 objective tests was done by a team of neuroscientists at NIDA in 2017 on its effectiveness for enhancing creativity, and the results were truly remarkable - a 65% enhancement in creativity.

The paper, *Enhancing creativity through seven stages of transformation in a graduate level writing course—A mixed method study*, was published by the International Journal *Thinking Skills and Creativity* in August 2020.

Neuroscience tells us that "contagion" happens if a creation is made with the authenticity I'm describing, and audiences and readers are alive to this authenticity - preliminary experiments show that an audience can sense authenticity - and, like the creator, feel a sense of wholeness and relief from the creation. So authentic art is healing. The ancient Greeks knew this, and ancient theatres were often connected to what we'd now call hospitals, not to mend broken limbs, but broken hearts.

I regularly take people overseas (I most enjoy taking people who claim they "haven't got a creative bone in their body") and skill them up on discovering their

creativity. For many it's quite a journey, for they have to leave behind assumptions and prejudices, but when they get there, they experience for the first time what bliss, exhilaration and contentment there is in being creative, and for the first time, feel that at last they're truly alive. And for others who come, they've always suspected how to create, but haven't quite dared because it seems illegitimate.

I'm writing this in December, 2020. The world

'Creativity is everyone's birthright.'

encourages us artists only to talk about what we produce, but makes us feel ashamed of the strange, unique thinking that we as artists must, physiologically, must do. In the outside world, we can only whisper it to each other. But to help other aspiring artists, and to remember it ourselves in the constant fight against society's pathology, we should commonly talk about this unique thinking.

It's my wish for 2021 that in the safe space of the Society of Women Writers, as a matter of course, we share with each other not only our creations, but the weird and extraordinary places we go to in their creation.

Creativity is everyone's birthright. All we have to do is remember how we thought as children, when we were all creative.



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The Art of the Book Cover

When graphic designer Kim Lock's debut novel 'Peace, Love and Khaki Socks' was published with MidnightSun, she found herself in the unique position of being offered the opportunity to design her own book cover. After that, she was asked to design MidnightSun's next cover, and the next... now Kim talks with us about creating the perfect book cover.

Hi Kim, thanks for talking to us. Could you tell us about the process of designing a book cover.

Firstly I receive a 'brief' from the publisher. This is always an exciting day, because it means there is another book coming into the world! The brief includes a little about the book: the premise, the intended readership, the theme or genre.

MidnightSun usually ask their authors to provide examples of other book covers they like, where they see their book positioned in the market, and any likes or dislikes. This information is also sent to me with the publisher's brief. I might ask a few questions to get a clearer idea about the book or how it needs to look, but otherwise, after this initial brief I'll start drafting concept designs.

I generally begin by browsing image libraries, playing with colours and typefaces, bringing elements together on the page. Once I have a good selection of concepts that I'm happy with – anything from half a dozen to 20 or more – I send these to the publisher. Then I wait!

Sometimes a concept is on the mark right away, and then we get to perfecting the cover. Other times, I might need to start over, and draft up new concepts. Sometimes, the chosen cover might be a combination of a few concepts – an image from one, a colour or typeface from another.

Once the publisher and author are happy with a front cover, I'll then layout the cover 'flat' – the front, back and spine. And then, once the internal pages are finalised, I prepare the print-ready file, have it checked one last time and approved by the publisher, and send it off to the printer. Everyone celebrates that day!

Do you read the book before designing the cover? If not, how do you determine what the cover should look like?

Usually, when I receive the initial brief from the

publisher, the manuscript is still in its early stages and the author is busy editing, but I will always read at least a few sample chapters, to get an idea of the theme and narrative voice. Sometimes I read the entire manuscript. I also always receive a detailed blurb or synopsis. MidnightSun love their covers to be as eye-catching and unique as possible, so it's a matter of balancing the right 'look' for the target readership with market trends, author and publisher preferences, and a beautiful design!

How long does the process take?

Working on initial concepts takes hours – anything from five or six to a dozen or more. I try to get these to the publisher within a few weeks of the brief. Then there are usually days / weeks / months of back and forth with the publisher, tweaking the design, moving elements around, adding the blurb and quotes, and finally, preparing the file for print. All up, it can take anything from several months to a year before the book hits shelves ...

How much input does an author have, and at what stages in the process?

This varies between publishers, of course, but MidnightSun are generous with how much author preference and feedback is taken into account throughout the entire design process.

It's important that a cover appeals to its intended audience, and while all authors need to understand where their book sits in the market, this is especially so at a small press, where publicity and promotion is 'all hands on deck!' An author is going to have to talk about their book for a long time, so it is important that they like their cover as much as possible.

Tell me about designing the spine of a physical book – how do you make it stand out in a book shop when it's on a shelf?

The width of the spine depends on the page count, which is something we don't know until quite late in the process – until the manuscript is final and the internal pages are typeset. But it's generally safe to assume it will be a very small area!

As with all design, the spine has to be both visually striking and functional instantaneously. We have so little time to capture the busy human eye. Clear type, effective use of space and little fuss are best.

How long have you been involved in it?

I started working at a magazine as a casual typesetter straight out of high school in 1998. Since then I've worked in art-rooms at copy centres and printers, in design studios in Darwin and Canberra, and I even did a stint as the in-

“We have so little time to catch the very busy human eye.”

house designer for a government department in Melbourne. I've been working for myself as a freelance designer since 2006.

What's your favourite part about designing book covers?

I adore designing covers for MidnightSun. Not only because they're a wonderful publishing house to work with, but because book cover design is the perfect combination of my love of books as a reader, as a writer, and as a designer. I love nutting out concepts – searching for the perfect imagery, typeface, colours – and feeling that spark of elation when it looks just right. But ultimately, the best thing is a happy publisher and a pleased author. When the whole team is proud of a cover, there's a real sense that the book has been given the very best start to life (which, of course, every book deserves!)

What's the hardest part about designing book covers?

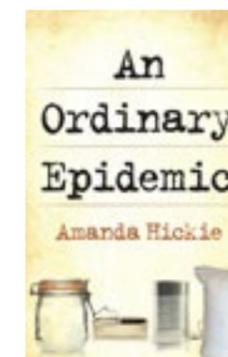
It's rare, thankfully, but sometimes the feeling that I just might not find the right concept. That can be quite terrifying.

Are you a big reader yourself?

Yes! I read widely and a lot. I'm a reader before I'm anything else. Always have been.

What's the favourite book cover that you've created?

How to pick just one?! One of the things I enjoy most about working with MidnightSun is that the publisher, Anna Solding, and I share similar design tastes, which means I tend to love all the covers MidnightSun has created. But I'm especially fond of *An Ordinary Epidemic* by Amanda Hickie. It's just so rustic and interesting, and something I'd be immediately drawn to as a reader.



Does your job change the way you choose books to read or view books?

Having perspectives as a reader, designer and author creates a unique set of voices in my head when I'm browsing at bookstores! It's usually something like: Ooh a new book from XYZ / Oh what a clever cover / Oh how interesting to put that author in that market ... But generally, I'm as susceptible to a lovely, intriguing or attention-grabbing cover as anyone else.



Thanks for talking to us Kim!



Jacqui Brown
@panachecat

'Honestly, I don't think I'd even be a writer if it wasn't for technology and the internet,' says Jo Thornely, author of *Zealot, A Book About Cults...* @jorthornely #blog #podcast #book #Zealot

BY JACQUI BROWN

The days of hiding behind our typewriters and keyboards are gone. Today, writers are in the public domain, expected to promote their own books, communicate with readers, be involved with social media. There's Twitter. Facebook. Insta. Do you even blog?

For some, technology isn't an unfortunate addendum to being an author, but integral to their making. That's how it is for Jo Thornely, author of *Zealot, A Book About Cults*, published by Hachette in 2019.

'Honestly, I don't think I'd even be a writer if it wasn't for technology and the internet,' Jo says. 'My style is nothing without the help of social media, blogging (originally), and podcasting.'

Starting her blog in 2006 with her own personal style of pithy posts packed with humour in the midst of the booming reality TV trend, Jo's satirical recaps of *Australia's Next Top Model* hit the country's funny bone. With comments, shares



and re-tweets flying across the internet, Foxtel even began sending her the episodes in advance, while the cast and production crew of the show entertained themselves reading her recaps aloud during their breaks.

Approached by the Daily Telegraph Opinions Editor

who liked her style and offered her a freelance opinion column in the paper, she has since freelanced with women's magazines, websites and journals. 'Technology and the internet has...

made me a lot more accessible,' Jo says. Even now, almost all her guest spots, writing work, events and contacts come from people who reach out to her via Twitter or Facebook.

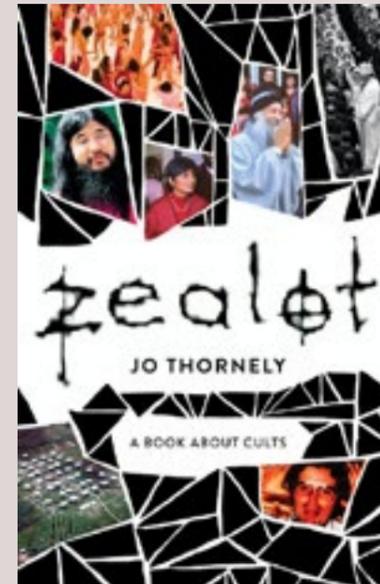
According to SocialMediaNews.com.au, 'Social Media users in Australia are some of the most active in the world, with a total of around 60% of the country's population active users on Facebook, and 50% of the country logging onto Facebook at least once a day.' In Australia there are 5.8 million monthly active Twitter users, and 10 million registered users of LinkedIn.

If you like listening to podcasts, those delightful audio chat recordings that you can download and carry in your pocket to listen to anytime you want, there's plenty to choose from - 1.75 million podcasts are available to subscribe to with 43 million episodes, nearly a quarter of which are listened to in the car. In early 2017, Jo thought that figuring out how it all worked and producing her own podcast would be 'something I'd enjoy and be okay at.' The online networks she'd developed gave her access to advice from so many people, and it made it easier for her to approach people to be guests on her podcast, *Zealot*. 'It really is a community,' she says.

Each episode of *Zealot* has Jo, a guest, wine, and a conversation about a different cult (yes, there are that many cults to talk about!). Past guests include radio announcer and TV personality Myf Warhurst, and writer and comedian Adam Richard.

Three years, a million downloads and a trip to Canada to do a live podcast at the Toronto True Crime Film Festival later, it's fair to say Jo's irreverent style has proven popular. So yes, it seems like something she's 'okay at.'

But why cults? 'They're terrible. But they're



You can follow Jo on Twitter (@jorthornely), Facebook (@zealotpodcast), at her Blog (jo-joblogs.blogspot.com) and find out more about *Zealot, A Book About Cults* at www.hachette.com.au/jo-thornely.

fascinating,' she says. Plus it was a great excuse to keep reading about them. And although the podcast is in her signature humour style, she's clear who is being derided. 'I try to stay respectful of cult followers, but as for the leaders - their main aim is to be taken seriously, so undermining them with ridicule is a true and useful pleasure.'

Described by Weekend Australian as 'a piss-taker of rare boldness', Jo claims humour is actually the only kind of writing she's decent at. But writing humour is no joke. 'Humorous writing is often seen as 'lesser' or more lowbrow than 'serious' writing,' she says, but 'comedians and humour writers are often the most politically savvy, engaging, accessible, and write straight to the heart of matters.'

In her reality TV recaps, there's usually a juxtaposed highbrow and pop-culture reference. 'It's like Georgia O'Keefe trying to paint flowers that don't remind you of vaginas, or, for the lowbrow amongst you, like a Kardashians asking for privacy,' she says in one recap. Her favourite ever comment from a reader was that they'd learned more about art from reading her *Top Model* recaps than they ever did in high school. They're probably not the only one.

Being an identical twin, Jo couldn't resist inviting her twin sister Shelley, also a writer, to be the guest on one of the podcasts. Jo begins by saying: 'This is going to be confusing for anybody listening because our dad can't tell our voices apart so we don't expect anyone else to.' Or maybe Shelley said that. No-one is sure. But while most people are horrified when they first hear their voice played back to them (it sounds weird because when we speak we hear our own voices conducted through our bony skulls), when editing the podcasts what it sounds like to Jo is that she's listening to her sister. 'It's comforting,' she says.

Zealot: A Book About Cults, based on the podcast, is described by the Herald Sun as 'deliciously sinister.' If you haven't read it yet - and you absolutely should - Jo says 'tweeting a lot, one paragraph movie reviews, blogging and podcasting have all given me really good practice at crafting stories, playing with humour, testing what works.' And it's how she became a published author.

A last note for women writers:

'There's a strong and wonderful community of women writers on Twitter, and it can be a truly supportive space. A lot of people think Twitter is full of trolls and bullying, but it's easy to curate your own experience and only interact with people and accounts that make you feel good and keep you inspired and informed... Plus, it keeps you in people's faces and is a spectacular tool for staying relevant and interacting with other writers and funny people.'

Cafe Take-Aways with Ursula Dubosarsky

Australian Children's Laureate 2020-2021

BY JACQUI BROWN

*I've been a fan of author Ursula Dubosarsky since I read *The Golden Day* at University, so it was a delight and a privilege to meet with Ursula in person last December at a beach-side café in Curl Curl for a coffee and a chat. Ursula arrived in her wide-brimmed hat, and was genuine and unassuming as she talked about the laureate, writing and her life. These are my favourite take-aways from our conversation.*



On all kids joining their local library:

'Nearly 50% of citizens of NSW are members of their local library which I think is incredible for a public arts institution. But it's not 100%.

'The library is open to everybody, it's a foundational democratic institution of our society. Everybody can join. Everybody can have a card. It's free. You can go as often as you like.

'I'm completely not against people owning books, obviously I'm a writer, please own as many books as possible! But I think it's more important to tell people to join a library than go and buy a book...

'We have fantastic public libraries in Australia and you can't take them for granted...

READ FOR YOUR LIFE! Ursula's Australian Children's Laureate theme:

'Reading has to be this habitual activity... It's not something you do once a year when somebody gives you a book. It's a habitual activity that has to be pretty central to your life if you want the future generations to be able to read.

'In primary school most children would regard the library as a place of pleasure even if they don't like reading... In high school (there is an) alarming descent in performance in public testing of reading ability. It's a dramatic drop from primary school to high school because they stop reading.

'To be a good reader you have to read.'

On kids becoming a good writers:

'There seems to be a bit of mystification about the art of writing... Writing is amazingly like reading, you just have to do it a lot... it's almost like a game, you learn the rules of a game, and you keep playing it and then you're competent.

'Art and painting was like that when I was at school. In Kindergarten, they taught you how to draw a stick figure and then after that you're on your own. The ones that were good seemed to have this mystical ability, and maybe they did, but the rest of us could've learned a few things - if we'd been taught.'

On encouraging kids how to borrow from the library, Ursula tells them:

'Don't overthink it, just explore, grab! Maybe half of them, maybe all of them you won't like. Next time grab a few (more books) rather than thinking too much about it.'

On being the Australian Children's Laureate during a pandemic:

'I'm the electronic laureate, and like everything that's had great advantages in terms of who you could speak to. It's true that live appearances have a certain frisson, and you do learn things when you meet people that you perhaps don't learn when you're at home with the computer... (Organisations) themselves have been more open to electronic visits and electronic resources and thinking of ways that doesn't require the actual physical person to be there, so I think (the reach of the laureate has) expanded pretty exponentially.'

On naming her characters:

'I do enjoy picking the names, it's true. I think about it, and I'm not really comfortable with a character till I find the right name, and in fact if I'm writing and I haven't found the right name I tend to just call the character X until the right name comes, because it's sort of important somehow, even though it's quite arbitrary.'

On writer's block:

'Writing a book is a sense of extreme discovery. Some idea, or intuition about an idea and you know it's interesting enough to write about - but the process is discovering what you think about it.'

Ursula follows what David Malouf says to do: 'If you've got writers block re-read the first few pages. Whatever you are wanting to say is always in those first few pages.'

On her writing:

'Writing is a compulsion. You write because you can't help it.

'I'm not a planning writer, I'm a sort of 'let's see what happens today' sort of writer. What I usually have in writing is a scaffolding...because I have a drifting mind which needs to focus.

'The scaffold for *The Red Shoe* was the dates. I decided the book would be set between... the dates of the Petrov crisis as it appeared in the newspapers... (Scaffolding is) my version of the plan, it's a kind of disciplining, something to stick your thoughts on.'



Ursula Dubosarsky with her new picture book, originally written and read aloud at the launch of Ursula's term as the Australian Children's Laureate in Canberra.

The March of the Ants

Written by Ursula Dubosarsky
Illustrated by Tohy Riddle
Published by Book Trail Press

Photo Credit: Philip Brown



note to self

laughter of friends on zoom
no more than a polished reflection
of its cosy reality

top priorities
when this isolation is over –
warm greetings hugs family
touch,
touch again

stay closer than 1.5 metres
smell the vibrance of youth
milky scent of a grandchild

crowd in as many concerts
art galleries, picnics in parks
walks by the sea

do not start the day
without first listening
for a message from the birds

note to self
never take your freedoms for granted
ever again.

Colleen Keating

An Accidental Love Affair with Poetry

BY MARGARET ZANARDO

I never set out to be a poet. Although I studied English literature and languages in high school and university, my first love was Art, and I later went on to study Graphic Design at TAFE. For most of my working life I was a Graphic Designer.

But around the time I hit middle age, in the midst of some major life events, I felt a need to write things down. On a whim, I enrolled in a writing course at my local community college, and enjoyed it so much that I took a second course! I began with short stories and started a novella. I joined writing organisations and also found a wonderful writing group, the Waratahs.

Then one day at a SWW workshop, I decided I'd like to try Poetry.

Why was I suddenly drawn to writing Poetry? Probably because poetry has the potential to express intense emotion. It is also a 'short' form of writing (I will often finish a poem in one sitting - with just a few edits to be made). And it is cathartic. It can transform and heal. Lastly, it is a great creative challenge - and perhaps there's a similarity here to the thought processes for Graphic Design.

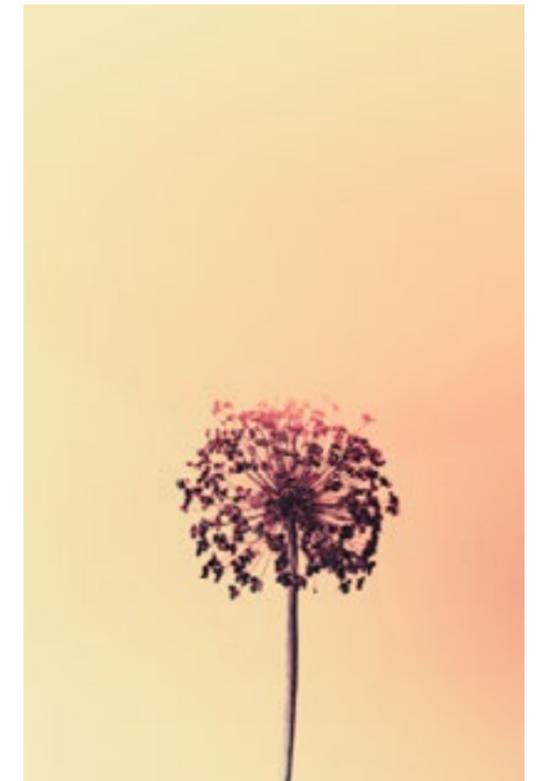
It's eight years now since I joined the Harbourside Poets at North Sydney. My first attempts at writing poetry could best be described as 'enthusiastic'. Reading poetry is one thing but writing poetry is an altogether different proposition. It didn't come to me quickly or easily, but being in the company of other poets was the ideal way to learn. Through trial and error and perseverance, I gradually 'found my voice'. My first poem was accepted for publication in November 2016 and this was great motivation to keep going.

All of us, I think, can relate to some of the situations in Time Out of Mind. They're poems about love, but also about the losses, regrets, and mistakes that we've all made at some time in our lives.

My inspiration comes from a variety of sources. For me, the idea comes first - knowing the ideas and emotions I want to express. Once I have a concept, almost anything can be inspiration. And then I know that I am writing towards the end of the poem. I rarely write lines or phrases without knowing where I am heading.

As for experimenting, even when the subject matter is similar, the challenge lies in how to express it. I don't want to write in just one style. I want each poem to have its own 'life'. It may have rhyme; it may not. It may have some rhyme; it will have its own particular rhythm; it may be written in first or third person, or frequently in second person, and there may be more than one persona speaking. I often 'see' the place, the people and the situation I am writing about, so there is likely to be some imagery, usually by way of metaphor.

I have continued to develop my writing and have now had some seventy poems published. These include poems on nature and the human condition, but also ekphrastic (about art), mythological, narrative and humorous poems and poems for children. Poetry has really been a solace during the past six months - I think it's helped to keep me sane!! I may be an accidental poet but that's OK because however I got here, it's an absolute joy.



You were not the first

you were not the first to touch my lips
with the sweetness of summer sun

you were not the first to shelter my head
from winter's lashing winds

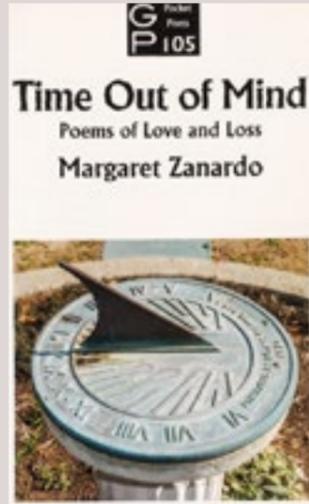
you were not the first to waken my heart
to spring's sudden song of desire

and you were not the first to read in my eyes
the memories I save

you were not the first, but you'll be the last,
you will take my soul to your grave

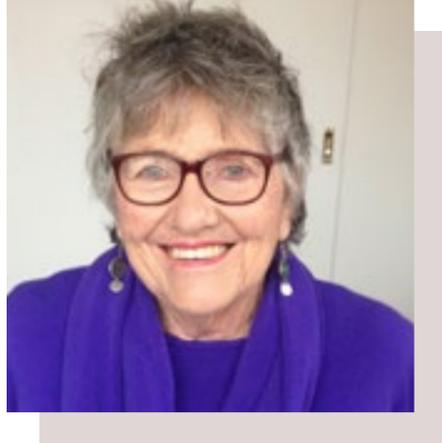
M a r g a r e t
Z a n a r d o

First published in The Mozzie, April/May 2017




Time Out of Mind, Poems of Loss and Love by Margaret Zanardo is available from Ginninderra Press website www.ginninderrapress.com.au

Winner of the 2020 Di Yerbury Residency: Ann Beaumont



Thank you to our judges, Colleen Keating and Sharon Rundle. Read their announcement below.

It is an honour and a privilege to judge the Di Yerbury Residency applications. The Residency is a prestigious award and a rare opportunity for writers to concentrate solely on their writing and research. The high standard of applications from our SWW Members makes the judging process quite a challenge.

We have selected Ann Beaumont as the recipient of the Society of Women Writers Di Yerbury Residency 2021. Congratulations to Ann and a warm thank you to all who submitted applications.

Ann Beaumont *Flesh Peddlers*

Ann's application is thorough and clear. She has a viable and fascinating work in progress and has a clearly defined Research and Writing Plan.

Ann has done preliminary research walking the paths of her characters in East Sussex. Her character Harriet is fiery and an agent for change. Her project is topical for today for it

is important to know more about the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, and Women in White which are the forerunners of female emancipation. As in *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* (Stella Prize 2014), reframing this history is most appropriate as women struggle towards equality in so many areas still today.

Ann's resume is very impressive. Her credentials as a researcher, historian and author are compelling. As a published author with at least six books to her name and several commissioned family histories completed successfully, her track record of publishing is assured. There is the possibility of a trilogy. The sample chapters from her previous book are well-written, well-researched and engaging for readers.

In our opinion, Ann would make excellent use of the Di Yerbury Residency, which would give her tangible support to write *Flesh Peddlers*, a powerful story for today. Our decision is that Ann is the writer who will gain most from the Di Yerbury Residency 2021.



POETRY JUDGED BY MARGARET BRADSTOCK

Winner Colleen Keating | Hildegard of Bingen

*

Highly Commended Pip Griffin | Margaret Caro

Highly Commended Colleen Keating | Desert Patterns

Commended Tricia Dearborn | Autobiocchemistry

FICTION JUDGED BY CAROLYN BEAUMONT

Winner Christine Sykes | The Changing Room

*

Highly Commended Diane Armstrong | The Collaborator

Highly Commended Carmel Bendon | Grasping at Water

Commended Cindy Broadbent | The Revolutionary's Cousin



Congratulations to all recipients in the Members Book Awards 2020



NON FICTION JUDGED BY JUDITH O'CONNOR

Winner Colleen Keating | Hildegard of Bingen

*

Highly Commended Jo Oliver | Jessie Traill – a Biography

Highly Commended Annabet Ousback | Red Herrings for Breakfast

Commended Jessica North | Esther

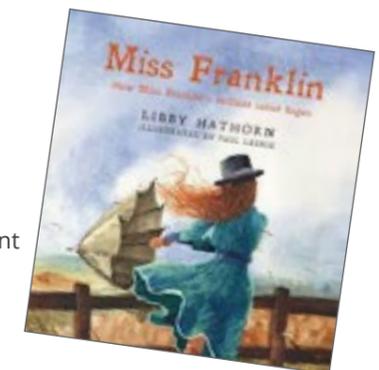
CHILDREN JUDGED BY PAUL McDONALD

Winner Libby Hathorn | Miss Franklin

*

Highly Commended Georgina Donaghey | In the Shadow of an Elephant

Highly Commended Susanne Gervay | The Boy in the Blue Glasses



Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Webby has had a long involvement with the Society of Women Writers and was awarded Honorary Life Membership in 2007 for her contributions as a judge of awards and encouragement of women's writing. Elizabeth is the judge of the Abbie Clancy Award presented at the State Library of NSW in March.



Q&A with Elizabeth Webby

What are you reading at the moment?

A novel, *The Diviners*, by Canada's Margaret Lawrence. It was published in 1974 and I bought my copy many years ago but only now getting around to reading it.

How have you been managing during the pandemic? Has it changed your reading and writing, in substance or habit?

I am not going out much because of my age and some compromised immunity so I am probably reading more than before. Trying to read books I have had on my shelves for many years as well as new books. Probably doing much the same amount of writing as before.

A lot of our members write for children. What was your favourite book (or books) as a child?

I was very fond of May Gibbs' *Snugglypot and Cuddlepie* books as well as, when slightly older, a novel set in nineteenth-century Australia called *West of Sunset* by Margaret Kiddle. And of course as a child of an era when there were not nearly as many Australian books for children as there are now, I was also an avid reader of Enid Blyton, the *Biggles* books and many others by English authors.

I assume that you were a great reader as a child. Did you write a lot?

No, I did not write a lot, except for school compositions, letters to friends and family, etc. I did publish a few poems and stories in the school magazine when I was in secondary school.

You have had a long career as an academic, specialising in Australian literature. You probably made many discoveries in the course of your research – do you have a favourite discovery?

Very hard to choose a favourite but perhaps it

would be an early poem by Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, which appeared in the Sydney newspaper the *Australian* in December 1838, called '*The Aboriginal Mother*', which was about the Myall Creek Massacre earlier that year.

The local community was divided about whether white stockmen should be hung for their murder of many Indigenous Australians, but Mrs Dunlop presented a very sympathetic view of the Aboriginal mother and her plight.

I republished this poem in a small collection of Dunlop's poetry in 1981 and since then it has appeared in a number of anthologies of Australian poetry as well as in the USA in a Norton anthology called *Poetry of Witness* (2014).

With a colleague from the University of Queensland I have co-edited a new collection of essays on Eliza Dunlop, her life and her writing that will be published by Sydney University Press next year.

Is there a book, or books, that you return to for comfort reading?

No, always too many other books to read!

You have been a member of the Society of Women Writers (NSW) for many years now. Among the groups and causes that compete for your attention, what is it that has attracted you to this Society?

I am not sure when and how I first learnt about the SWW, perhaps I was invited to give a talk. Over the years I made many friends through the Society, some of whom are sadly no longer with us. I also helped judge various competitions and enjoyed many luncheons with wonderful speakers. When I was editing the literary journal *Southerly* from 1988 to 1999 I was able to publish some poems and stories by members. As well, I had

the pleasure of launching a number of books by members and helping generally to encourage women to keep writing.

You have been the Judge of the Abbie Clancy Award for a number of years now. What do you enjoy most about that role?

I have been retired from the university for thirteen years now so it is interesting to see which authors women students are currently researching. While some students present new perspectives on contemporary works, others have done fascinating work on little known women writers of the past.

How do you think the academic study of literature, and the general reading and writing community, can best connect?

When I began my university studies in 1959 there was little connection between academics and the wider literary community. Over the years this changed as more Australian writers were studied in universities. In 1978 the Association for the Study of Australian Literature was set up and was very concerned to involve writers and readers as well as academics. It had considerable success over the years as lots of writers and others came to its annual conferences. This was before the many writers' festivals were established. There was also a writer-in-residence program at universities funded by the Australia Council. More recently, however, the funding has been cut for that and other programs run by the Literature Board though ASAL does still get some money from the Copyright Agency to invite writers to speak at conferences. Also academics no longer are encouraged to spend time in community engagement as part of their work. The emphasis now is on publishing research in international journals. But most universities now teach courses in creative writing so that does provide some help and encouragement for aspiring authors as well as helping established writers to earn money.

You have said that it is never too late to start writing. Do you have other hints or tips for new and aspiring writers?

It is important to read a lot to keep up to date with what is being published as well as to write regularly. It is also important to revise what you have written, and edit and proof read your work carefully before you send it out. It helps if you can discuss your work with friends and get another perspective on it too.

Old Worlds, New Worlds, Other Worlds, My World

Old

On my wall
Faded family photos,
The memory.

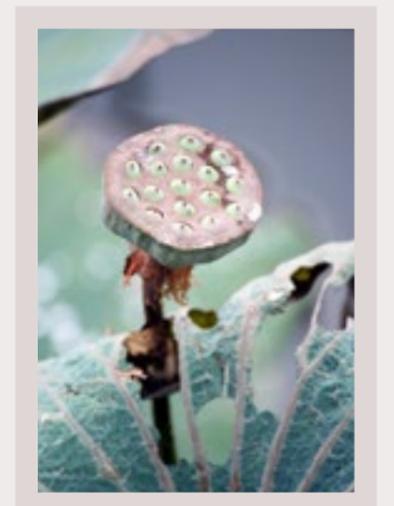
New

Around my garden
Seed pods burgeoning,
The promise.

Other

Through my window
The not-so-distant stars.
The wonder.

So much to sightsee ...



First Regional Luncheon a Great Success

BY ANN BEAUMONT

Springtime is a glorious time in the Southern Highlands; and so it was for our first regional get-together and luncheon last November.

Hosted by member Kinchem Hegedus at beautiful Springfield Farm, 20 minutes from Bowral, the event was a resounding success. Part of a committee initiative to involve regional members more in SWW activities, it was also an opportunity to recruit new writers wishing to connect with others in their area. Indeed, we did gain six new members as a result of the luncheon. They are most welcome and we look forward to their participation in our organisation.

Initially, writers on the South Coast, Southern Highlands, Canberra and South West Sydney were invited to attend and it was obvious from the response there is a lot of interest in members linking up with others in their own region. We had writers there not only from across the Southern Highlands but from the Wollongong area, Berry, Canberra and Crookwell.

Some country members do get to Sydney from time to time to attend lunches and workshops at the Mitchell library, but it is not feasible for others. It seems a much easier option for people to meet up at a regional centre.

As you are aware, during COVID all activities at the library were suspended and many of the talks took place via zoom. This gave all members the opportunity to take part, and the committee is exploring whether zoom can be continued for

members outside Sydney once we get back into our program again.

While the main reason for the 25 November meeting was a member link-up there is no doubt having sisters Kate Forsyth and Belinda Murrell as guest speakers was a big drawcard.

Co-incidentally, at the time of organising the SWW event, Kinchem was talking to Kate and Belinda about the retreat they are having at Springfield



next July. On the off-chance, she suggested we invite them to join us and talk about their new book *Searching for Charlotte*. They replied in the affirmative within 24 hours as they see themselves as Southern Highlands locals, direct descendants of Charlotte and Louisa Atkinson, early colonial writers who lived at Oldbury, Sutton Forest. The sisters are both SWW members and their "Sister Act" performance promoting their book was great fun.



On arrival at Springfield a cuppa and home baked biscuits were served. The talking started and it hardly stopped until the last person drove away later in the afternoon! It was very rewarding to watch people who had never met before bond so quickly – their love of writing an immediate link.

For the meeting Kinchem gave us use of her studio which looks out over farmland and a shimmering lake fringed by a grove of trees sporting their new Spring leaves.

Ann Beaumont chaired the meeting and invited everyone to introduce herself and touch on the genre in which she is working. There was such enthusiasm for writing and the immediate connections between people was palpable. It was great to hear about such a wide range of interests and listen to those just starting to write seriously.

We had a delicious lunch, including organic vegetables grown on the farm, in the lovely two storey farmhouse overlooking the lake.

Once our updated website is up and running again there will be some innovative additions which will give regional members even more opportunities to take part in SWW activities.

Our next get-together in the Southern Highlands will take place in March and the committee is keen to hear from other members interested in organising a lunch or morning tea in their area.

If you have any suggestions, are prepared to host a function or need more information you can email Ann Beaumont at abeaumont6@bigpond.com



Carmel Summers (Canberra) and Alex Warner (Berry)



Jo Oliver (Austinmer) and Gillian Brennan (Burradoo)

Gwen Wilson (Wollongong) (left) and Denise McKenzie (Bundanoon) (right)



5

WRITE ANSWERS

What significant thing did you learn after you were published?

One Question.

Five Answers.

Every Issue.

Got a burning question? Something you're keen to know? Want to know how other writers do it, don't do it, or what their secrets are?

Please submit your questions to the editor: jacqui.brown@panachecat.com

And if you'd like to be asked a question, don't be shy, my email is just there, right above this paragraph! I'm very friendly, so why not put your hand up?

Pat Simmons

Once the euphoria I experienced when my first children's picture book was published had worn off, reality struck.

Yes, I had a published children's book out there in the big wide world but so did thousands of other people. Famous people, established authors, royalty even.

So the significant thing I learned was that I couldn't hide behind a computer screen, I had to promote the book ... in person. That was scary. Fortunately I'd had a long career in children's services before retirement, so I visited child care centres armed with the book and a collection of live mini beasts. The book, *Ziggy's Zoo*, is about a little girl collecting exhibits for her backyard zoo. The kids loved the live critters!

My confidence grew and I've now presented at libraries, book shops and children's writer festival.



Pat Simmons lives at Scarborough on the NSW south coast. Pat's picture book, *Ziggy's Zoo* illustrated by Vicky Pratt was published by Little Pink Dog Books in 2018. Her new picture book, *The Cat Thief*, illustrated by Liz Duthie, published by Little Pink Dog Books is due for release July 2021.

www.patsimmonswriter.com.au

Georgie Donaghey

While achieving publication is the ultimate dream for a writer, once realised it doesn't mean you can sit back and relax. You have been in training up until this point. Now the hard work begins.

You have to be as pro-active as your publisher in promoting your upcoming book, if not more. Utilise the contacts you have been building up. Get out into your community, offer free talks, promote and market your book. But don't be pushy. You don't want to burn those contacts.

Remember one publication does not automatically roll into a second and so on. You need to continue to work hard and grow as a writer every day.



Georgie Donaghey is an award-winning author, editor, mentor, and founder of Creative Kids Tales and the Creative Kids Tales Speakers Agency. Her picture books *Lulu*, *Clover's Big Ideas* and *In the Shadow of an Elephant* appear on the Premier's Reading Challenge, Kinderling Kids Radio, Kindergo and the Virgin and Qantas inflight entertainment channels.

www.creativekidstales.com.au

www.georgiedonaghey.com.au

Felicity Pulman

I'm always learning new things, but my most useful lesson came after publication of my *Shalott* trilogy: know your story's ending before you begin, and trust your imagination to lead you there!

My trilogy (Random House Australia 2001) began as a one-off fantasy adventure, but the story evolved into Book 2 and finally Book 3 because only then did I realise my character's true quest when first she'd recreated Camelot using her father's VR program. Had I known that from the beginning, it would have saved me a lot of time, rewriting - and money! My trilogy, updated for today's teenagers, now has a strong narrative drive, combining magic, technology and clues to lead my character forward in her quest, while posing the question: can five teenagers change the legend of Camelot or will they change their own future instead?



Felicity Pulman is an award-winning author of novels for children, teens and adults, including *Ghost Boy*, *The Janna Chronicles* and *I, Morgana*. Her stories reflect her love of legends and fantasy, history and mystery. Book 1: *Shalott - Into the Unknown* will be published in March.

www.felicitypulman.com.au

Helen Thurloe

Not that you write a novel in expectation of fame and fortune, but I didn't know about the Australian Lending Right Schemes, ie Educational Lending Right (ELR) and Public Lending Right (PLR).

These are annual payments from the Australian Government designed to compensate authors for free access and multiple use of their work through libraries and schools.

The result is a welcome deposit into my bank account every June since my YA novel *Promising Azra* was published by Allen & Unwin four years ago. These remittances now add up to more than the royalties from the book itself.



Helen Thurloe is an author and a poet. Her debut novel, *Promising Azra*, was shortlisted for a 2017 NSW Premier's Literary Award, and awarded the SWW NSW Book Award - 2018 Young Adult. In 2019 Helen travelled to the UK on the SWW NSW Di Yerbury Residency to undertake research for her next novel.

www.helenthurloe.com.au

Kate Forsyth

Not everyone will love what you do! Rejection, criticism, and negative feedback do not mean you are a terrible writer. It simply means that everyone has different tastes.

I remember being heart-broken when I was a young writer by things that wouldn't even bruise me now. I have learned to listen and learn and grow in response to constructive criticism, and keep on doing my best to be true to my own voice.

Resilience, strength of spirit and faith in oneself is so crucial in a creative spirit! It is far better to live a life filled with creative joy and honesty than to keep trying to please people who will never be pleased. So take joy in your writing, be true to yourself, and find kindred spirits who love what you write - and always be kind to other writers! We are all sensitive souls.



Dr Kate Forsyth is an internationally published author. Her books include *Bitter Greens*, which won the 2015 ALA Award for Best Historical Fiction and *Searching for Charlotte: The Fascinating Story of Australia's First Children's Author*, longlisted for the 2021 Indie Book Awards.

www.kateforsyth.com.au

Rewind on February!

Our 2021 workshop programme was kicked off with a sensational presentation With the long-awaited return to the Dixson Room in the State Library. Romance authors, Kandy Shepherd and Cathleen Ross gave a one and a half hour workshop on Stripping the Love Scene Down. Here's what happened!

Stripping the Love Scene Down with romance authors Kandy Shepherd and Cathleen Ross

Writing a love scene is difficult, especially when you're a romance writer and people make the strangest assumption that an author does the things s/he writes about. After all, no one asks crime writers if they kill people but when it comes to sex, everyone's got an opinion.

After we went through the things that can stop an author writing love scenes, we covered the five main steps involved in writing a love scene. We suggested starting the attraction with eye contact, followed by the touching of hands, a kiss and so on.

Conflict plays an important part in a love scene, by that we don't mean fighting in bed, but story tension. How will the love scene change the relationship, how will it affect the primary conflict? Will it bring the couple closer together or tear them apart? For example, will the kiss of a colleague change the workplace relationship? What if it's a cop guarding a woman he shouldn't get involved with?

After setting the scene and mentioning it's always good to include the five senses, we did a practical exercise and using some entertaining prompts: We asked the audience to imagine the type of character who would wear the prompt and to write an introductory paragraph for their love scene. Three writers read out their scenes to great amusement.

We ended the workshop showing a YouTube of *Bridgerton* to demonstrate the concepts we had been teaching.



Kandy Shepherd and Cathleen Ross

Our Autumn into Winter Programme

14 April

WORKSHOP | Wendy Frew: *Drawing Inspiration from Family Photos, Letters & Memorabilia*

MEMBER GUEST | Christine Sykes: *Gough and me: the Whitlam Effect*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER | Susanne Gervay: *Heroes of the Secret Underground*.



'I grew up with the secrets of the past, like many second generation children of survivors. *Heroes of the Secret Underground* was written to resolve hidden ghosts, recognise the courage of kids and bring knowledge from the past to create warriors of justice for the future.' *Susanne Gervay*

12 May

WORKSHOP | Pippa Kay: *The Shape of Story*

MEMBER NEWSBITES

KEYNOTE SPEAKER | Susannah Fullerton: *Reading One's Way through Covid*

25 May

SPECIAL EVENING WORKSHOP | Judith Beveridge: *The Power of the Image*

9 June

WORKSHOP | Margaret Bradstock: *Environmental Poetry*

MEMBER GUEST | Wendy Frew: *Leane Times: Bringing Family to a Broader Audience*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER | Jo Lennan

14 July

WORKSHOP | To be advised - but it'll be something fabulous!

MEMBER GUEST | Olga Chaplin & Maria McDougall:

A Collaborative Exercise in Self-Publishing

KEYNOTE SPEAKER | Donna Abela, Playwright

The Future of Education – Are You Ready?

BY ZENA SHAPTER

Technology has changed every aspect of our lives, and education is no different. Blackboards and chalk are now historical intrigues at Sydney's Living Museums. Whiteboards are now smartboards – watch what marker you use! Zoom workshops soared into necessity during Covid-19. Now flexible on-demand courses are the new thing set to rise.

Professor Tricia McLaughlin, speaking from Melbourne's RMIT School of Education, has long believed education delivery needs reshaping to 'anywhere anytime learning', given the growing demands of the 21st century. "The concept of a teacher standing in front of a room full of students who listen and respond to direction is increasingly a thing of the past... as technology continues to advance, students need to grow their learning with it."

In his article 'What Learning Will Look Like In 20 Years?', eLearning Industry expert Christiaan Henny suggests the #1 change to shape the future of education is diverse time and place, in particular "eLearning tools [that] facilitate opportunities for remote, self-paced learning."

For today's modern writers, flexibility is crucial, and the online space offers the perfect opportunity to extend knowledge and skills.

As storytellers, writers understand the power of research and example, as well as the constant need to juggle responsibilities. On-demand courses offer the best of everything, combining flexible access with the ability to exemplify through hyperlinked references, visualise with thought-out images and professional graphics, and practice with online exercises.

Most on-demand courses consist of content items such as video, text, images, graphs, articles, quizzes, exercises and assignments that learners access and complete at their own speed. The online space deepens and enriches the learning experience so much there's no turning back!

*Supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW and the Northern Beaches Council, **Zena Shapter** offers 11 on-demand writing and book creation courses through her website at zenashapter.com.*

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