

The Victorian Writer

Dec 2016–Jan 2017

|

Beyond the Page





Mention this
advert and receive
50% off your set-up fee

Want to self-publish and sell your book on-line? We have the solution...

BookPOD provides authors with quality, yet affordable book printing services using digital technology. BookPOD also offers an online bookstore for our Authors to use as a retail platform.

Our services include:-

- Typeset • Cover design • Publicity Kits • Book printing
- ISBN/Barcode acquisition • On-line store (free listing) • Business cards and bookmarks
- E-Books (formatted to meet iTunes & Kindle requirements)

All our books are printed on quality stocks. Our pricing includes a full colour cover, with matt or gloss laminate finish and your choice of binding.

To receive a non-obligation quote call Sylvie or Michael on:- **(03) 9803 4481** or email us at sales@bookpod.com.au or visit us at:
www.bookpod.com.au



roasters • retailers • wholesalers
PADRECOFFEE.COM.AU

LOOKING FOR A PUBLISHER?

Have you written a novel, a biography, a family history, poetry, an instruction manual or a selection of short stories? The first step towards achieving your dream is to obtain an objective opinion of your work.

The Melbourne-based Sid Harta Team appreciates that it is a brave step to hand over one's work to a stranger. Our editors bear this in mind with an assessment that is sensitive while critical, encouraging, and realistic. Sid Harta Publishers is offering writers the opportunity to receive specialised editorial advice on their manuscripts with a view to having their stories published.

Visit our websites for submission requirements & further supportive information:

Sid Harta Publishers: <http://sidharta.com.au>

Send us your manuscript: Submission details: <http://publisher-guidelines.com>

Sid Harta Book Launch and Reviews: <http://on.fb.me/sidhartapub>

Call for Manuscripts



Sid Harta Publishers specialises in new and emerging authors, and offers a full range of publishing options.

We publish:

- print editions, print-on-demand via Amazon, ebooks for all platforms.

Call us to discuss our service.



Contact us:

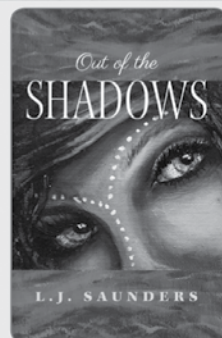
author@sidharta.com.au

Phone: (03) 9560 9920

Fax: (03) 9545 1742

SID HARTA PUBLISHERS Pty Ltd:

Suite 99, No 66 Kingsway,
Glen Waverley, Victoria 3150.



Editorial

For most of us, writing calls for words on a page (or a screen). And once they're there, that is where they'll stay, waiting to be read – like these words I'm writing.

But what about the life of writing and writers beyond the page?

In this issue, we look at a number of ways writers are going off-page. Benjamin Solah writes about the open mic experience, a very raw expression of words living off the page. Comedy writing is transformed off-page through performance, but it is a craft many writers shy away from. Tim Ferguson assures us that it is nothing to be feared, in fact, it all boils down to a very simple principle.

We also venture into the workplace. Maria Takolander speaks with writers working in some non-traditional writing roles; Myfanwy McDonald travels beyond her comfort zone on an international residency in Finland; and Richard Holt challenges us to take words out of context.

Also in this issue, we have poetry by Andy Jackson, writing by Paola Balla, and Claire Varley, and a personal reflection by Eugen Bacon.

This issue coincides with the launch of Writers Vic's 2017 Season 1 Program. I encourage you to get comfortable, open the booklet and take your time exploring all the courses on offer – there is still so much to learn about writing! 📖

Emma Cayley, Editor



Cover Artist: Greedy Hen
jackywinter.com/artists/greedy-hen

Acknowledgement

The Writers Victoria office is situated on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation.

GET PUBLISHED IN 2017!

If you dream of getting your story out into the world, we will help you achieve your goal with a full range of publishing options (traditional and self-publishing), including marketing help to sell your book through global distribution.

With the right help and advice, the publishing process is fun and rewarding.

Call Blaise, the book chick, today to book a complimentary 30-minute discovery session to see how you can make it happen.



Start your book journey today!

Busybird Publishing

2/118 Para Road, Montmorency
VIC, Australia 3094
T 613 9434 6365 M 61 416 157 281
E busybird@bigpond.net.au



www.bushbird.com.au

Short Memoir Contest \$1,430

2nd Prize: Week on Writers Retreat - Casa Ana, Andalusia, Spain

- Judge: Horatio Clare
- Closes: 31 Jan '17
- Word Limit: 4,000
- Entry fee: \$23, \$14 subsequent

10 best submissions will be
published in the
2017 Fish Anthology.



also online:

- Writing Courses:

Short Story
Flash Fiction
Memoir
Poetry
Screenwriting

- Critique & Editing Services -



details:

www.fishpublishing.com

Fish Publishing, Durrus, Bantry, Co. Cork, Ireland.

KidLitVic



20 May 2017

State Library of
Victoria

Meet the Publishers

A chance to meet Australia's top
publishers & agents

Allen & Unwin

Black Dog Books/Walker Books

Curtis Brown Australia

Ford Street Publishing

Hachette Australia

Hardie Grant Egmont

HarperCollins Publishers Australia

Jacinta Di Mase Management

Penguin Books Australia

Random House Australia

Scholastic Australia

Scribble/Scribe Australia

Text Publishing

The Five Mile Press

Wilkins Farago

Windy Hollow Books

kidlitvic.com.au

kidlitvic@gmail.com

Manuscript Assessments with Writers Victoria

Want professional feedback on
your manuscript? Get advice from
an industry expert.

writersvictoria.org.au/support

WRITERS
VICTORIA

All about writers

The Victorian Writer

Editor Emma Cayley

Editorial Committee Anna Brasier, Adriane Howell, Shivaun Plozza, Allee Richards, Kirstie Reeve, Fabrice Wilmann, Cory Zanon

Proofreaders Fiona Murphy, Hayley Stevenson

Printing Metro Printing

Distribution Melbourne Mailing

Printed on 100% recycled paper

Subscribe

Receive all editions of The Victorian Writer with Writers Victoria membership from \$50/year. Join or renew memberships at writersvictoria.org.au or phone 03 9094 7855.

Submit

Submissions on upcoming themes are welcome from Writers Victoria members at least two issues in advance. Please see themes listed online first.

Advertise

For enquiries about advertising in The Victorian Writer or in the enews, program or online, see writersvictoria.org.au/magazine or email editor@writersvictoria.org.au.

Disclaimer

While information is printed in good faith, Writers Victoria can take no responsibility for its accuracy or integrity. Inclusion of advertising material does not imply endorsement by Writers Victoria. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Writers Victoria staff or committees.

Contact

Writers Victoria Inc,
Level 3, The Wheeler Centre,
176 Little Lonsdale St
Melbourne VIC 3000
03 9094 7855 | writersvictoria.org.au
Email info@writersvictoria.org.au
ABN 18 268 487 576 | ISSN 2203-1197
ASN A0019533Z

Staff

Director Kate Larsen

General Manager Alexis Drevikovsky

Communications/Editor Emma Cayley

Program Claire Capel-Stanley

Membership Sarah Vincent

Write-ability Fiona Tuomy

Membership and Finance Officer Adriane Howell

Program Assist Deanne Sheldon-Collins

This publication includes advertising from third parties. Any opinion, advice, statement, service, offer, information or content made by advertisers does not necessarily reflect that of Writers Victoria. Any reference to services offered by a third party does not imply its endorsement or recommendation by Writers Victoria.

Features

Ask an ALAA Agent:

How do High Discount Royalties Work? 6

Working With Words

Maria Takolander 10

The Inescapable Conclusion

Tim Ferguson 12

The Change Room

Andy Jackson 15

Open Up, Stand Up

Benjamin Solah 16

Words Go Wild

Richard Holt 18

Unexpected Benefits of the Unfamiliar

Myfanwy McDonald 20

Three is the Magic Number

Paola Balla 22

From Our Members

Why I Write

Eugen Bacon 24

The Nudists Next Door

Claire Varley 27

Regulars

Arnold Zable

PEN Report 8

Penny Johnson

Nitpicker Quiz 9

Milestones

29

Classifieds

30

Competitions and Opportunities

31

Workshops and Courses

32

Ask an ALAA Agent

How do High Discount Royalties Work?

ALAA Agent Jenny Darling (Jenny Darling & Associates) explains the complexities of high discount royalties.

Royalties* are very important. They are, after all, the primary source of an author's income. Royalties compensate you, the author, for your work. Good royalties, proper royalties, will increase your income.

One of the first questions authors ask – or should ask – about their contracts is: what is the royalty rate? The standard beginning royalty rate in Australia on regular sales is 10 per cent of the recommended retail price (RRP) (ex-GST). So if the RRP of a book is \$32.99, the GST is \$2.99, so the author is paid 10 per cent of \$30, that is \$3.

An important variable in royalty rates is what are called high discount royalties.

High discount royalties come into play when publishers sell books in large numbers. Booksellers, wholesalers and large department stores expect extra levels of discount from publishers if they buy in bulk.

We are lucky in Australia that the number of books sold at very high discount is not as high as it is in, say, the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, it is an area for an author to look at carefully.

There are two main areas of concern with high discount royalties: the actual royalty paid; and the discount level at which the high discount royalty kicks in.

The royalty paid

In an ideal world, high discount royalties should be a percentage of the RRP. In the United Kingdom, the standard high discount royalty rate is four-fifths of the prevailing royalty rate. It is common in Australia for the high discount royalty to be a percentage of 'amount received' or 'price received' by the publisher, usually 10 per cent. This is unsatisfactory in many ways.

First, a royalty based on RRP allows you to 'follow the dollar'. A royalty based on 'amount received' or 'price received' makes that impossible, unless the publisher provides you with more information than they generally do in their royalty statements.

For example, for high discount sales, the only information that usually appears on a royalty statement is something like this:

560 copies @ 10% Price Received
Amount received: \$4760.14
Royalty = \$476.01

However, the author cannot ever really know if this sum is correct without seeing all the invoices from the publisher for this amount. The publisher supplies no other details in reporting high discount royalties, so the author must take on trust that the publisher is correctly reporting these sales.

‘If you have an agent,
never talk directly to your
publisher or editor about
contractual matters. This is
your agent’s job.’

Also, the author cannot see how many copies were sold at each discount. An author cannot assume that all these 560 have been sold at the same discount. Some may have been sold at 60 per cent, some at 70 per cent. When a royalty is based on an RRP the reporting is transparent. When a royalty is based on ‘amount received’ or ‘price received’ it is not transparent. Authors, as the owners of their own copyright – it is, after all, only licensed to the publisher – deserve more transparency.

The discount level

In every contract it is important to note at what discount the high discount royalty comes into play. Continuing with the previous example using the book priced at \$30:

A high discount rate of 50% = \$1.50 royalty

A high discount rate of 60% = \$1.20 royalty

A high discount rate of 75% = \$0.75 royalty

You can clearly see that the high discount royalty is significantly less than a regular royalty. In most publishers’ contracts the high discount royalty starts when the discount is greater than 50 per cent. This is too low, but many publishers these days refuse to negotiate on this issue.

An ideal high discount royalty in Australia starts when the discount is greater than per cent. The royalty from this point on – up to per cent discount – should be half of the prevailing royalty.

Royalties on sales at a discount greater than 75 per cent are almost always 10 per cent of the amount received. Books sold at this discount are generally for export or for special sales.

Here are some questions to ask your publisher before you agree on the royalty rates:

1. How many copies of their books do they sell at high discount?
2. What percentage of the print run is likely to be sold at high discount?
3. What is the highest discount they give to department stores and wholesalers?

Sale or return

Books are generally sold on a ‘sale or return’ basis, meaning that any books a bookseller hasn’t sold after (usually) three months they can return for a credit. This applies to high discount sales as well, something I have never understood. If a bookseller is getting a high discount how come they are allowed to return the books as well? It seems like double dipping to me. It is not good for the author – it has never been clear to me why publishers agree to such an arrangement

Finally remember this: if you have an agent, never talk directly to your publisher or editor about contractual matters. This is your agent’s job. ⑩

*Here I am referring to the usual practice of trade publishers. I am not including academic or educational publishers who operate under different norms.

Jenny Darling is the agent at Jenny Darling & Associates (JDA). Established in 1998, JDA represents a premier list of internationally known authors. Authors represented by JDA include Robyn Arianrhod, Jessie Cole, Alison Croggon, Garry Disher, Peter Doherty, Mem Fox, Rosalie Ham, Lian Hearn, Judy Horacek, Eva Hornung, Mireille Juchau, the Estate of Elizabeth Jolley, the Estate of Dorothy Porter, Tim Winton and Charlotte Wood.

Jenny Darling & Associates
jennydarling.com.au

Australian Literary Agents’ Association:
austlitagentsassoc.com

PEN Update:

More Uncertainties

PEN International's campaign on behalf of Kurdish-Iranian writer and journalist Behrouz Boochani, incarcerated on the Manus Island Detention Centre, was launched in September 2015. The campaign has recently been renewed, taking into account developments that have taken place since then.

As I write this column, on 14 November, there has been yet another radical shift in the fate of the 900 asylum seekers marooned on Manus Island. The men received the news yesterday that they may be resettled in the US. Their initial enthusiasm and sense of relief that their three-and-a-half year ordeal may be over rapidly changed to anxiety when they realised that there remain uncertainties about the resettlement. They have been let down many times before.

Meanwhile, the PEN campaign continues and Behrouz Boochani continues to bear witness in many mediums, including an extraordinary film shot on a mobile phone: 'Chauka please tell me the time', which we preview in our next edition of the 'PEN Melbourne Quarterly'.

On 11 October, I attended the Diaspora Symposium Refugee and Asylum Seeker Discourse, held in the NSW Parliament House. Behrouz Boochani was honoured with a Social Justice Award for his courageous work as journalist and advocate on Manus Island. He has been incarcerated there since mid-2013. During that time, he has continued to post stories, opinion pieces and photos taken inside the camp, and continued work on a book documenting his imprisonment on Manus Island. His pieces have been published in Australia and overseas, and have appeared in 'The Saturday Paper', 'The Guardian', 'The Age', and 'Huffington Post' and other outlets.

In presenting the award, event organiser Saba Vasefi described Behrouz Boochani as 'a citizen of the world, whose reports from detention with a small mobile phone and restricted

internet access remind us of the possibilities for resistance.'

In accepting the award, Behrouz put together a podcast with his voiceover, accompanied by visuals and music. The presentation was powerful, disturbing and beautiful – all three. It featured images of asylum seekers marooned on Nauru and Manus Island, scenes shot through detention centre wire, and photos which convey the heat, the isolation, the squalid rooms and dormitories, and the endless waiting that has broken the spirits of many detainees. There are also images of detainees protesting, and of wounds they have sustained in unprovoked attacks.

The award was accepted on Behrouz's behalf by his Sydney-based translator, Moones Mansoubi, who has translated many of his writings. Behrouz said: 'I hope the award will encourage notable Australians to criticise their country's system of offshore detention. Why they are silent? I know some of them are trying, but I think the pressure is not enough.'

Behrouz, who fled Iran in fear for his safety due to his writings on Kurdish culture, states: 'Resistance is the ceaseless struggle for humanity... the never ending struggle against tyranny.' He continues this struggle on two fronts: against Australia's brutal offshore processing regime, and in continuing to write about Kurdish rights in Iran.

There was something else at work at the symposium. Many of the speakers and performers were former refugees and asylum seekers. These included Iranian filmmaker, poet and human rights activist Saba Vasefi who conceived and organised the symposium, and who spoke eloquently about the need for refugee voices to be heard in the public discourse. 'They should be given every opportunity to speak for themselves,' Vasefi argues, 'rather than constantly being spoken of, and treated as "the other"'. Behrouz has also spoken of this tendency. In his writings



and his ceaseless advocacy, he has broken through into the mainstream, despite his confinement.

Other presenters included the first female Muslim parliamentarian, NSW Greens MP, Dr Mehreen Faruqi; and human rights campaign director at GetUp!, Shen Narayanasamy. They too called for more refugee voices to be heard.

Vasefi spoke of the tendency of refugee advocates to reduce asylum seekers to their victimhood and refugee status, without acknowledging their agency – the courage and initiative it took in the first place to make the journey. Many had, as had Vasefi, set out to rescue themselves, in fleeing oppression, and seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

Detainees have been incarcerated on Manus Island for almost three-and-a-half years. And in disturbing developments, there are reports that the Australian government is spending

\$20 million on a new immigration centre in Papua New Guinea to hold Manus Island based asylum seekers who have had their refugee status denied and been condemned to deportation.

It is time to allow asylum seekers on Nauru and Manus Island to settle in Australia. They are being driven mad. They have been imprisoned yet have committed no crime. Meanwhile, Behrouz Boochani, working up to eighteen hours a day, continues to document their plight. ⑩

Arnold Zable
PEN Melbourne
Defending freedom of expression,
promoting literature.
Join us at penmelbourne.org

Nitpicker

Your monthly editing lesson, brought to you by Penny Johnson,
Program Manager of Professional Writing and Editing at RMIT.



CC image courtesy of John Bugg on Flickr.

1. Here are some (passed / past) tips I have given job seekers preparing for interview.
2. Be friendly, (professional / act professionally) and smile.
3. Listen carefully (; / :) don't interrupt.
4. Prepare several (well informed / well-informed) questions to ask.
5. Bring appropriate documentation with you, (such as / like) your academic transcript or referee details.

Answers on page 33

Working With Words

Maria Takolander interviews four industry professionals about their diverse careers working with words.

Anyez Lindop is Senior Publicity Manager at Penguin Random House in Melbourne. She has managed publicity campaigns for some of Australia's best-loved and most highly acclaimed authors, including Peter Carey, Andy Griffiths, Anna Funder and Tim Winton.

MT: What are the most important qualities for your job?

AL: Don't apply for a job in publishing if you don't read. A grounding in literary history also helps, as this is what informs the discourse – in the media, at writers' festivals, doing a pitch, in the back of a cab with an author. Don't apply for a job in publishing if you're not an avid consumer of the media: radio, TV, newspapers, blogs. And add a dash of chutzpah.

MT: What has been the highlight of your career?

AL: Gosh – there have been so many magic moments. Jeanette Winterson's 'The Passion' was one of my favourite books at Deakin University, and now I get to be the one whose hand she squeezes as she leaps off-stage like a sprite from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

MT: How important is publicity to the literary industry?

AL: Whether I'm writing a press release, crafting a pitch, or phoning media or booksellers, my job is about taking stories out to an audience and connecting authors with readers, always bearing in mind that words have the power to change lives. Life is nothing without stories. Stories give us confidence to go out into the world and help us find our way home again. Without stories, we are lost.

Libbie Chellew's short stories have been shortlisted for the Iowa Review Awards and the John Marsden Prize. She works in the script department of Foxtel's award winning drama 'Wentworth'.

MT: What is the biggest difference between writing for the page and for the screen?

LC: Having control of a story was something I always took for granted. But once a script goes out to the producers, location manager, director, art department and cast, it's subject to all kinds of changes – in response to tight budgets, weather, or cast availability, for example.

MT: Creative writing is solitary, while scriptwriters work in teams. How have you experienced that change?

LC: We plot the show as a team and I love it! They're long exhausting days – it's tough coming up with fresh ideas for eight hours – but it's great fun too. Once we've plotted the episodes, they're allocated to writers, who spend a couple of months drafting before the script is distributed to cast and crew. Then we often have to make adjustments on set.

MT: What advice would you give to someone wanting to get into scriptwriting?

LC: Join the Australian Writers Guild, attend their events, and try to get onto their pathways programs via their competitions. Look into Shane Brennan's Scripted Inc, a funding body for Australian scriptwriters. A good mentor is important. For TV writing, get your foot in the door by note-taking or script coordinating. You get these gigs by networking. Read as many scripts as you can. TV is growing, with services like Stan and Netflix commissioning shows. It's an exciting time for screenwriters.

Brooke Maggs is Co-Director of Burning Glass Creative. She has worked as a writer for The Voxel Agents on 'The Gardens Between', an adventure puzzle game with no text or speech, and for Opaque Multimedia on Earthlight, a VR space game. She was recently named one of the 100 most influential women in games.

MT: Tell us about the transition from conventional writing to writing for games.

BM: The transition was interesting as my first game, 'The Gardens Between', is an adventure puzzle game with no text or speech! The game, though, is narrative-driven, with story providing the context for the game-play (why is the character solving puzzles?) and giving players a reason to keep on playing.

MT: How have you experienced the shift from solitary writing to collaborative work?

BM: I work with an artist, designer and animator to communicate story to the game player. As a result, I've had to sharpen my skills so that I can communicate story through non-verbal cues – colour, music and puzzles, for example. I also have to consider others' creative vision and input and remain flexible. Game development is extremely iterative, things change, and the narrative has to change with it.

MT: A lot of attention has been paid to sexism in the games industry. What has been your experience?

BM: I have felt isolated and I've questioned my place in games, which can stem from being in a minority group. However, diversity is the topic of panels and talks at Games Connect Asia Pacific, Australia's biggest industry conference, for example. There are also opportunities for women. Film Victoria offers a Women in Games Fellowship for women to advance their careers in games. There are also organisations like WiDGET (Women in Development (Games + Everything Tech)), which support women in tech fields and are invaluable.

Prithvi Varatharajan is a freelance producer of literature and arts programs for ABC Radio National (RN). His poems, reviews, interviews and essays have appeared in Australian and overseas journals.

MT: How did you get in this line of work? What does it involve?

PV: I approached the host of RN's 'Poetica' in a theatre queue in Adelaide. I explained that I was a regular listener and asked to do a work placement. After that, he gave me the opportunity to try my hand on a production, which led to ongoing freelance work.

The work involves pitching an idea for a program to a commissioning panel, including details about content, structure, sound and resources needed. If this is approved, I do the recording (location recordings, interviews, readings the studio), some editing at home, and finally I work with a sound engineer at the ABC to finish the production.

MT: What is the role of radio when it comes to literary culture?

PV: Radio has an affinity with literature, which are both based on voice. In this sense, it is perhaps the ideal medium for literary adaptation and discussion. It is also such an important platform for literary dissemination. Some of the audiences for RN programs are greater than for printed books. 'Poetica' had up to 60,000 listeners each Saturday, numbers far greater than sales of any individual poetry book in Australia.

MT: Your work involves profiling the creative writing of others, but how do you express your own creativity?

PV: Production involves many creative choices. When producing a program on a writer, I direct the readings of poetry or fiction, shaping how those readings sound. I also choose music, sound effects, the placement of interview clips and readings, and the way everything is edited together. 🎧

Maria Takolander's most recent books are 'The Double and Other Stories' (Text Publishing, 2013) and 'The End of the World' (Giramondo, 2014). She is an Associate Professor in Writing and Literature at Deakin University in Geelong.



The Inescapable Conclusion

Comedy writing is a narrative craft like any other form of writing. So why, asks Tim Ferguson, is it rarely taught?

Dear Writer,
You've done general writing courses. Have they mentioned the ancient principles of comedy? The mechanics of laughter creation? The proven and easily explained writing tools you need to build comic characters and stories?

If writing teachers haven't taught you the first thing about comedy, there's a chance they believe comedy's a natural gift, a cheeky instinct or perspective on life that can't be taught. They are mistaken.

Narrative comedy is a craft. Like any craft, it can be taught, learnt and mastered. Try this small class in one of narrative comedy's joke principles:

What do the following pieces of comic dialogue have in common?

1.
ALLAN: What are you doing Saturday night?
MUSEUM GIRL: Committing suicide.
ALLAN: What about Friday night?
(*'Play It Again, Sam'*)
2.
KIM: I'm not a size 16, Mum. I'm a size 10.
KATH: Country Road's size 10.
(*'Kath & Kim'*)
3.
LUCILLE: Get me a vodka rocks.
MICHAEL: Mom, it's breakfast.
LUCILLE: And a piece of toast.
(*'Arrested Development'*)

4.
SOOTHSAYER: (*Examining tarot cards*) I foresee you will have no children.
CUSTOMER: That's rubbish! I have six children! What do you say about that?
SOOTHSAYER: Tell them to be careful.
(*'Philogelos Joke Book'*)

Most people don't know the technical principle that connects these exchanges, but the comic principle is simple. It's forehead-slappingly obvious when you know it. And it's ancient. (The Greek joke writer Philogelos lived circa 400AD.)

So what's the link between the jokes? It's not their subject matter, as each of the four exchanges involve different topics – dating, jobs, drinking and divining.

It's not rhythm. Three of the jokes (1, 3 and 4) follow a classic tripartite pattern, but the second is a two-line pattern.

It isn't the characters. Each plays on the unique qualities and immediate desires of very different personalities and the settings are important in grasping their situations.

It's not the nationalities. Two of the jokes are American, one is Australian and the Philogelos joke is from Ancient Greece, so it has no direct contemporary, cultural or regional link to the other three segments of dialogue.

The connection is a simple narrative comedy principle. A 'principle' is not a formula and it certainly isn't a rule. It acts as a framework, much in the way scaffolding can be used to construct a building. The buildings may be

made of differing materials – bricks, wood, mud – but the scaffolding used to guide the construction is the same. To put it another way, a hair-roller provides the same function; hair colour, strength or style has nothing to do with the function of a hair-roller itself.

Be warned: once you know the principle, you won't forget it. You will recognise it in virtually every comedy you see.

The principle is known as the 'inescapable conclusion'. The premise of each exchange is fought against but cannot be denied. Just when we think it's resolved, the premise is proven resolute. The gag surprises us with the inescapable truth of the premise.

Spontaneous and involuntary laughter is compulsory in comedy. Wry smiles, knowing winks and mutters of 'Well played, Sir,' are all very well, but laughing out loud is an audience demand.

To create out-loud laughter, writers must create a surprise which accords with the audience's perception of truth. This is why one person's comedy is another's flatline. Subject matter and the (often subjective) truth being highlighted with it, must be known, palatable or of interest to the audience. Without affinity of any kind, a joke dies. For example, political humour works best if the audience is onside. If they don't agree with the subjective truth of a joke, audiences can quickly become bored or angry. 'Greenies' and Young Liberals each have their own sweet spots and no-go zones.

The principles of comedy can be applied to any subject matter, be it topical, smutty, political, childish and so on. Once the gag is constructed, the principle is only apparent to someone who knows what to look for. Like hair-rollers, no part of the principle is left behind.

This particular comedy writing principle relies on the audience falling for a simple trick of misdirection. In each example, they are led to assume there will be a twist on the premise – perhaps Allan will give up, Kim will admit she is a size 16-and-a-half, Lucille will delay her morning vodka and the customer will get a refund.

When each premise is proven to be inescapable, the truth of the characters acting true to form and the inevitability of the situation comes as a minor surprise, a surprise

‘To create out-loud laughter, writers must create a surprise which accords with the audience's perception of truth.’

that makes sense. Most punchlines cause an audience member to think, 'I should've seen that coming!' If the audience does see the punchline coming, they will duck the punch.

The 'Inescapable Conclusion' gag type is to be found in many narrative comedies or one-liners. (For example, the American comedian Martha Raye opined, 'Ask any girl what she'd rather be than beautiful and she'll say "More beautiful".')

Knowing the principle doesn't necessarily ruin the enjoyment of such jokes, but if you claim to be a writer of any kind you should be aware of it. As is clear, the simplicity of the principle doesn't restrict its broad application over centuries and across seas. And it is easily grasped, even by someone as complex as a writer.

Knowing the principle allows a writer to construct a scenario and to know when the comic principle is fulfilled. The steps are either a tripartite pattern:

1. Outline the premise: DR KELSO: Do you think I got to be chief of medicine by being late?
2. Challenge the premise: DR COX: No. You got there by backstabbing and ass kissing.
3. Confirm the premise: DR KELSO: Maybe so, but I started those things promptly at eight. ('Scrubs')

Or a two-step pattern:

1. Outline the premise: BERNARD: [About the job] The pay's not great...
2. Confirm the premise: but the work is hard. ('Black Books')

The number of comedy principles is clear and finite. They provide frameworks for creating gags, stories and characters that can appeal to all kinds of audiences. Writers can learn these principles by trial-and-error, research or direct teaching.

Gag types like character confirmations, self-referentials, distortions, reversals, absurdity, extrapolations reversals, negations or puns can be identified, practiced and mastered.

Comic character creation principles include exaggeration and the instillation of ironies. Comedy stories have similar principles. All the narrative comedy principles have been defined. Dear Writer, what are you waiting for?

A writer of drama should have no problem in tackling comedy. Narrative comedy is, after all, the compression of drama. And the 'laughing mask' is one half of the symbol of Drama, so most writers have followed their instincts in creating comic elements.

There are dozens of tertiary writing courses being offered across the nation, each charging thousands of dollars. But in most writing courses there is no comedy module available. Is the assumption that the writers of sitcoms and comedy movies merely follow their instincts?

Comedy writing is not taught as a diploma- or degree-level module in any tertiary institution except at RMIT (as part of their Professional Screenwriting Degree) and intermittently at AFTRS. This is baffling, when the principles of comedy are as simple and effective as the one detailed above.

As the exercise above shows, elements of the narrative comedy craft can be defined and taught, and the idea that it is not worth teaching is ludicrous. There is work waiting for writers who can reliably deliver comic scripts or dramatic scripts with both 'masks' consistently present.

Comedy is a craft. You can master it.

The conclusion is inescapable. ⑩

Tim Ferguson is author of 'The Cheeky Monkey – Writing Narrative Comedy' (Currency Press). His Comedy Writing Masterclasses can be found at www.cheekymonkycomedy.com. This is an edited version of a piece first published in 'Island Magazine'.

WV is running a Comedy Writing workshop with Dave O'Neil in March 2017.

Visit writersvictoria.org.au for details.

The change room

By Andy Jackson

This morning, walking almost naked
from the change room toward the outdoor heated pool,
I become that man again, unsettling

shape to be explained.
Such questions aren't asked to my face. Children
don't mean anything by it, supposedly, so I

shouldn't feel as I do,
as my bones crouch into an old shame I thought
I'd left behind. Chlorine prickling

my nostrils, a stranger
compliments me on my tattoos and shows me hers –
a dove in flight over a green peace sign –

as if the canvas was unremarkable.
She turns and limps away,
and something makes a moment of sense.

I lower myself into our element
and swim, naturally
asymmetrical and buoyant. Quite some time

later, showering, the man beside me
is keen to chat – how many laps we've each done,
how long I've lived in this town, the deep

need for movement.
Speaking, our bodies become solid.

Andy Jackson's most recent collections are 'Immune Systems' (Transit Lounge, 2015) and 'That knocking' (Little Windows, 2016). He blogs about poetry and bodily otherness irregularly at amongtheregulars.wordpress.com

'The change room' is published in 'The Best Australian Poems 2016', edited by Sarah Holland-Batt (Black Inc., 2016).

Open Up, Stand Up

Benjamin Solah writes about braving the open mic experience and how it has changed his writing for the better.

Most of us are no doubt aware of the disheartening silence that can follow submitting a piece of writing to a journal or magazine. You toil away at that poem or story only to hear nothing; not what to improve, the bit that had promise or why it just didn't fit with that issue. It's a familiar problem faced by writers that made it hard for me for many years to keep submitting.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say reading on an open mic for the first time changed my writing life. With barely anything published, a friend invited me along to an open mic night in Brunswick called Passionate Tongues. I could come just to watch or read on the open mic if I felt like it. I wasn't much into poetry at the time, but I did have one poem I thought I could read out.

Before I even got up on stage though, I'd already learnt a lot. I'd already seen half a dozen other poets get up and read their work. It taught me that you can take the idea of writing a 'poem' and run in so many directions with it, from the more formal styles of poetry, to playing with voice, telling a story, rhyming, using abstract words or performing something more like a song or rap. Some people performed direct political pieces, others comedic, others distant stark images or personal confessions.

You know that thing where journals advise you to read the journal before submitting? That night on the open mic probably made the point in spades. There's something about being in the room with a bunch of other writers, your mind expanding at how they did or didn't approach the same task as you, that inspires you to keep going.

When I got up, I was a little nervous, but unlike the passive or distant feeling you might have toward your audience in the act of writing, reading it felt so different. I could see that people were listening, yet none of these people knew me at all. After a while, each time I read on the open mic, I could work out what worked and what didn't.


First, the act of reading a piece aloud picks up clunky sentences, if they go on for too long and other things you don't notice. Secondly, the reaction from the audience is invaluable. Are there bits where the audience really goes quiet and pays attention or do they wander off, does someone start talking at the back? Where do they laugh? In some open mics, there's more audible feedback, in slams a lot of people click their fingers at good lines or even shout out encouragement when you pause. I write weird stuff, so I'm always looking for when people laugh or gasp and when to pause to leave them room to do that for next time.

After you read, many people will come up to you and tell you they liked what you read out, maybe a line they really liked, or talk about a theme you might have raised. The feedback is much more immediate. You know who your audience is. It's what keeps me coming back, it's what keeps me writing. Of course, I still write for myself, challenge myself to explore topics I'm fascinated by and then try to make the audience engage with it, but reading on an open mic makes it a two-way conversation.

If you're wanting to try it out yourself, there's many spoken word and poetry open mics in Melbourne and throughout Victoria, such as Passionate Tongues at The Brunswick Hotel every second Monday; The Owl & Cat Readings at The Owl & Cat Theatre in Richmond on the first Sunday of the month; To the Ends of the 'Verse in Northcote or Upwey once a month; The Eltham Courthouse Readings once a month, and more in every corner of the city.

Most have a notebook or whiteboard to sign up on at the front near the stage. Some have limited spots, so be sure to get there early to sign up. And many have 'feature' poets who read for longer, around fifteen minutes or half an hour, who are asked to read because they're usually pretty good at what they do. You can learn a lot from them or just be really entertained. If you're super keen, you could even enter a slam, like Slamalamadingdong or Ruckus where you get three minutes and random audience members give you a score out of ten. The points don't matter so much though, it's a fun modification to the open mic format.

At all open mics, first-time readers get up all the time and are very welcome, celebrated even. Just make sure you keep to the time limit, usually under five minutes, project your voice or speak clearly into the microphone so people can hear you and be aware you'll usually read faster than you think, so try not to rush.

You will meet some other writers, get to share your work with people who will listen, and connect with that elusive audience that is usually distant reading off the page somewhere else. 

Benjamin Solah is a spoken word artist, raised in Western Sydney but lives in Melbourne, where he founded Melbourne Spoken Word. His writing has appeared in pages, on screens, on stages, on trams, in wrestling rings and other odd spaces, as well as at White Night, Melbourne Fringe, the NGV, and many regular poetry events around Melbourne.



Benjamin Solah performs 'My Anxiety' at Melbourne Speaks Poetry presented by Melbourne Spoken Word at White Night 2016. Still from YouTube.

Words Go Wild

Writer Richard Holt on taking words out of context and thinking beyond the page.

We grow up with written language in particular contexts. As writers, our focus is often on the type of words that live on pages. Talking to a group of primary students recently, I dubbed these ‘tame words’. Look at them, all lined up neatly; black on white, like these words here. I could throw down a string of expletives and they’d still be safely held in their tidy lines.

As someone who came to writing from visual arts, I’ve always enjoyed wild words. Sure I write the tame stuff too – formal in format and very big on ‘meaning’ – but I love to explore other ways to use words.

Earlier this year I produced the latest in a series of text-based visual arts projects. ‘Text Me’ at ArtSpace in Ringwood included text as animated projections, in video, as two-dimensional artworks and as an installation involving the inverted word ‘REFLECTION’ – technically meaningless, but resolved by its suspension over a large mirror so that the ‘reader’ could recreate the word only by physically and visually inserting themselves into the viewing process.

The exhibition built on work I’ve been doing with Spineless Wonders, a Sydney-based publisher that actively pursues non-traditional avenues for texts. Over recent years, we’ve been producing micro-fiction videos for public screens. Having previously shown at Federation Square during the 2013 and 2014 Melbourne Writers Festivals, we screened the most recent selection at the 2016 Newcastle Writers Festival.

This video project, ‘Flashing the Square’, has developed to the point that writers’ works are now accompanied by not only my video design component but also audio. Narration is done

by professional actors (courtesy of Spineless Wonders’ ‘Small Wonders’ live readings) combined with soundtrack music composed in response to each text by students from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

After the success of the video program this year, Spineless Wonders is hoping to partner with Newcastle Writers Festival again in 2017 to produce a more extensive range of ‘off the

‘Wild words are not for every writer. But thinking beyond the page might just be the best way to overcome inhibition.’

page’ text experiences. It is fantastic to see publishers and festivals thinking beyond the published page and programming text and writing in more experimental formats.

‘Text Me’ allowed me to explore a number of ‘off the page’ writing opportunities more extensively. In the translation project, ‘Lost in Translation’, a very short story was retold in a number of community languages while the English original was withheld (other than to the NESB contributors who retold it). This conceptual artwork played with the chicken-and-egg relationship between text and narrative.

I also produced two ‘Words Go Wild’ short videos with primary-aged children who storyboarded ideas based on wild words. In the two versions of our story, ‘When Hungry Met Tasty’, ‘Hungry’ is not just a word but a physical presence, all teeth and slobber. By giving words physical form children are

Unexpected Benefits of the Unfamiliar

Myfanwy McDonald takes herself (and her writing) way out of her comfort zone and signs up for an international residency.

Every writer who strives to write well has to make an investment in their writing. The greatest investment for most will be their time. Other investments include manuscript assessments, paid mentorships, journal subscriptions, writing courses and festivals. In short, there are many more ways to spend money on writing than there is to make money from it.

Writing residencies are another potential investment. In Australia, residencies that cover the cost of accommodation, or provide a stipend, are rare. As a result, they're highly competitive, especially for writers who don't have a lot of runs on the board. Even for writers who fund their own residency, there are relatively few options from established organisations in Australia. Beyond Australia, though, the options are comparatively abundant, especially in the Northern hemisphere.

Fancy a week in a French villa to work on your novel? Or a few weeks at a creative retreat in India, polishing off that collection of short stories? Or something more adventurous: a month-long residency on a cargo ship, perhaps? If you can read through a list of international creative residencies without salivating, check your pulse, because you may not be alive.

Of course, self-funded international residencies aren't a feasible option for everyone. Most writers aren't exactly flush with cash, so even residencies at the cheaper end of the scale may break the budget. On top of the cost

of the residency, there's also the cost of the airfare, travel insurance and all the associated costs of international travel. When you take all that into account, it seems reasonable to ask: why bother? Surely it's just easier to write in your own lounge room.

In 2015 – having failed to secure any Australian-based residencies or fellowships – I applied to undertake a residency at the Arteles Creative Centre in Finland. I had made a number of investments in my writing – short courses, a writing mentorship program, and subscriptions to a number of literary journals – but what I really longed for was an uninterrupted block of time to write.

Bound by the restrictions of a full-time job but unwilling to give up the financial security it provided, I was working on my fledgling novel in those 'in between' spaces familiar to most writers: the quiet moments of early morning, the commute to work, lunchbreaks and late at night. I was heartened by the fact that many writers I admired had managed to succeed in similar circumstances. Raymond Carver said that he wrote short stories rather than novels because, 'I had no money at all and [my wife and I] had to work all the time... So I set myself to writing poems and short stories. I could sit down at a table, start and finish in one sitting.' And Toni Morrison once stated, 'I am not able to write regularly. I have never been able to do that – mostly because I have always had a nine-to-five job. I had to write in between those hours.' But all the heartening anecdotes in the world wouldn't get my novel written. I began to fantasise about a solid block of time

to write in the way normal people daydream about tropical holidays.

My application to Arteles was successful and in September, I left Australia to undertake a month-long, self-funded creative residency in a country I had never visited – and had never even planned on visiting – 15,000 kilometres from home.

Every investment has an element of risk. I had no idea if the money I had invested in this residency would help me achieve my goal: to complete a full draft of my novel. What if I got there and found I was only capable of writing in brief snatches of time? What if I found, in the long, lonely stretch of an entire day, that I was not the writer I thought I was? What if all the distractions I believed were holding me back from writing were, in fact, a distraction from the reality that I was a fraud and my novel was a dud?

Some friends and acquaintances were bemused. Why Finland, of all places? Was I writing a novel based in Finland? (Well, no, actually, nothing to do with Finland.) And what does the program look like? Will I have classes every day? (Um, no, there are no classes. No mentors. In fact, no schedule or program whatsoever). My standard response was: 'I just need some time, you know, away from everyday life, to work on the novel. Plus, there's an onsite 24-hour sauna.'

Established by artists, Arteles is located outside the industrial city of Tampere in Southern Finland. In a rural area, surrounded by lakes and farmland, much of the accommodation at Arteles is in an old primary school.

I began the residency by drawing up a schedule of tasks, allocating each scene in my novel to a specific day. When not working on the novel, I decided I would work on some unfinished short stories. I wrote my goals on Post-It notes and stuck them onto the stark white bedroom wall I had been allocated.

Although some creative residencies are for a single person, many are designed for a group. I was living with eight other creative types, half of whom were writers, the other half artists. There's something wonderful about mixing with creative people from all over the world, especially if all of them are, like you, displaced

from their everyday lives, open to adventure and keen to learn.

International residencies have other benefits. If you're based in a country you've never been to, the unfamiliar environment can spark new ideas, concepts, thoughts and inspiration. The dense, gloomy forests around Arteles – so different to Victoria's dry, open sclerophyll bush – inspired within me a deeper level of creativity. Being a stranger in a new environment led me to feel a greater sense of empathy with the characters in my novel, because they were also strangers in the scenes I was creating, feeling their way around the narrative I was trying to build.

I found that despite my good intentions, I simply wasn't able to write for eight hours a day, seven days a week. I couldn't work at writing in the same way I worked at my day job, and after a while I wondered why I would even want to. The energy and diverse practices of my fellow residents led me to expand my creativity well beyond the confines of my laptop. I dabbled in book art and made Post-It note mandalas. I rewrote fairy tales and collected found objects. All the while, I continued to work on my novel. The 'extra-curricular' creative pursuits brought a greater level of depth to the narrative in my novel, as if by following new creative routes myself, the landscape of the story became more multi-layered.

In the end, I didn't leave the residency with a full draft of my novel. I left with four chapters and a fresh outlook. The value of an international residency may lie less in what happens on the page, and more in what happens in your own head when you're freed from the familiar aspects of your everyday life. The investment in a new perspective is what makes these residencies worthwhile. The risk is that it may not bring about the outcomes you expect. ⑩

Myfanwy McDonald's fiction has been published in 'Going Down Swinging', 'Infinite Scroll' and 'The Big Issue'. Her novel is about a series of unusual events on board a ship travelling to Australia in the mid-nineteenth century.
www.myfanwy-mcdonald.squarespace.com.

Three is the Magic Number

By Paola Balla

Our carpet is mission brown, as are the skirting boards, the velvet curtains, and the paint on our commission house. I'm surrounded but seek the comfort of this sameness. Checking I'm alone in the lounge room, I creep to the spot just below the wall heater where in winter I lay on my back and stretch my legs dangerously close to the burning hot air for relief from our Murray River-town cold.

I contort myself by laying on my left side so that my hands come together at the juncture between the wall and floor and press my fingers on the mission brown skirting board. Each finger has a particular position and I take a breath and begin:

'Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven, bring us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Amen.'
Repeat.
Repeat.

A fourth repetition when I stumble on the last line, it disrupts my ritual of three, so I start over again to make sure this time it is perfect. If it's not perfect, someone I love will die. That would be my fault, which is not acceptable, so I start again. If I don't do this daily mantra three times in lots of three, more people I love will die.

Once the prayer to a lord I fear is completed in a set of three, I call for God to bless all of my family members in an equally particular way:

'God bless Mum.' This is always fraught as I worry that Dad will be angry for not putting him first, and because I only see him once or twice a year and maybe he needs the extra attention, he does get awfully jealous.

'God bless Johnny,' my little brother who I worry even more about, as he never sees his dad any more and cries a lot and has asthma. 'God bless Nan,' she needs a lot of prayers as she lives alone now and only has little tins of food in her pantry and gets stared at by shop keepers and is usually served last.

My list goes on to include my stepmother and sisters who live in Melbourne with Dad in a huge brown brick house, which is full of food and money, while ours is never full of money and sometimes not much food.

I finish with, 'May they be safe and warm and free from harm.'

Because I was so completely absorbed, I hadn't noticed my brother standing behind me with his little eleven-year-old fists clenched over white knuckles. Tears filled his eyes. 'You're fucking crazy! I hate you!'

I immediately try hiding in a tangle of lies. 'I was just looking because there was a spider and I was trying to get it.' I was burning hot, ashamed and terrified he would tell Mum and Nan. Worst of all, I had frightened him. He ran to his bedroom slamming the door, trailing the words 'You are crazy!' down the hallway.

I begin constructing a story to cover my tracks in anticipation of being exposed, a process I had perfected from a very small age to hide the trespasses of adults and older and bigger children against me. I learnt to tell lies. Carl, a teenager we called doopey, a Koorie English way of describing someone 'slow,' who to our Koorie family was poor white trash, that other whites belittled and excluded and we pitied. 'Poor fulla,' nans and aunties would tut tut. We were taught not to be cruel, but kind. We were taught compassion, but not to be condescending.

We found his snow white hair and pale skin startling and he loved to follow us around the

street, 'Carl you can walk with us for a bit, but not all the way, OK?'

We had weak stomachs, and Carl's forever snotty nose made us gag and giggle uncontrollably. Nan would rouse on us, 'Stop it you kids, poor fulla can't help it.'

We'd drop our heads in shame, but we would soon lose our temper when he would ask where our fathers were. Asking Koorie kids where their absent fathers were was fighting words and Carl didn't know better.

'Carl, you gotta piss off now. Go home!'
'But, how come you don't got no dads?'
'We do Carl!' Walking faster in a hope that his slow gait would separate us from him, his questions would get more insistent, 'But how come you only got mums?'

My brother and cousin and I all looked at each other at once, sensing a conspiracy my cousin started, 'Well Carl, my dad is a war hero from the Vietnam War and he's home because his back is sore, he got shot in the back by the Vietcong.'

Carl's blue eyes widened, 'Woah.'
'Yep, he killed some of them as he went down but,' he emphasised this point by spraying spitty bullet sounds out his pursed lips and arching his arms round with his invisible AK47. Carl's mouth dropped open. I saw my opportunity. 'And my dad, Carl, well he's dead. Killed in action in Vietnam, they brought him home in a body bag.' Carl would never know my father was alive-and-well in Footscray making pizzas and arguing with drunk white men who called him a wog, till Dad ran them out of his shop.

At Moama Public School, we were feared and disrespected and I was bashed and called an abo and a coon and the kids who were called crippled were called spastics and were bullied too. There was a white boy who sat alone eating raw potatoes under a tree, I mean we often went hungry but to see someone that desperate made me so sorry for him. But in survival mode, us Koorie kids always laughing, mocking and never taking things too seriously, laughing at the darkness and being blackly funny, trauma making us laugh at things that would make others weep and shudder.

I grew up surrounded by people with disabilities, particularly other Koorie people in my hometowns, but they weren't seen

as any different from the rest of our mob. In fact, it meant they were treated just the same, not with pity, but a normality in which speech impediments, limps, missing limbs, busted-up wheelchairs and diabetes were mocked, laughed at and just, well, accepted. I was fascinated by a family that pushed one of their kids all over town in trolley instead of a wheelchair, filled up with blankets and shopping and clothes. They went everywhere. The town was flat, and that trolley was pushed all over.

We were taught to be kind, tolerant and to include other children with disabilities but very wary of able-bodied people who were able to harm us: physically, mentally, sexually or spiritually. We were taught to be aware of the abilities of not just people, but animals, places, the land itself, water, trees, fish, dogs and spirits, ghosts and creatures that could take you away, eat you up or send you insane.

We were taught to be aware of consequences, not just to ourselves, but to others, to Country, to family, to children and animals. We were taught to be responsible and be responsive. Aware, suspicious and cautious of white people mostly. People who were taking advantage of vulnerability and a lack of so called resilience, which I believe is a highly overrated and over-emphasised quality, somewhat like happiness or motivation.

Not being resilient enough sounds a lot like being a failure, that you are ill-equipped to survive other people's transgressions, putting all the burden on the victim. But what if I'm too worn down to be resilient? What if other peoples transgressions, and perhaps a divine intervention are the cause and effect of my disability. ⑩

Paola Balla is a Wemba-Wemba and Gunditjmara woman of Italian and Chinese heritage. She is an artist, curator, speaker, educator and cultural producer. Paola's work is driven by social justice, addressing impacts of colonial trauma (particularly on women and children), and creating spaces of ownership and listening through creative practice. She challenges us to rethink preconceived attitudes and assumptions.

This commission was supported by the Australia Council for the Arts.

Why I Write

By Eugen Bacon

I set out to craft an article about why I like to write and how I write. I understood from the onset that my writing is a search, a journey, a coming through... Text shapes my silence. It shouts my chaos. I often start with a skeleton, a general idea, and then the writing shapes itself. Characters tell their story and the story's ending often astonishes me.

My approach to the compositional space is with excitement, with a sense of urgency, with a knowing that writing is an active speaking that emerges from a neutral position of unknowing, or a subjective position of knowing.

My writing is shaped by the influences of other authors as mentors, authors like Toni Morrison, Peter Temple, Michael Ondaatje and Andrew McGahan. These authors seduce me, magnetise me with the boldness of their writing, the attention to mood, prose, characterisation, writing that listens to the playfulness of language.

Finding curiosity in the writerly worlds of others, I unveil two authors on the 'New York Times' website: André Aciman and Rick Bass. Aciman is an American memoirist, essayist and bestselling novelist. In his article 'Why I Write', he shares his pilgrimage to the past:

What my dentist cried out one day after finally removing an unsuspected fourth nerve from one of my molars comes to mind each time I try to understand myself as a writer. Do I, as a writer, have what he called a 'hidden nerve'? Don't all writers have a hidden nerve, call it a secret chamber, something irreducibly theirs, which stirs their prose and makes it tick and turn this way or that, and

identifies them, like a signature, though it lurks far deeper than their style, or their voice or other telltale antics?

Like Aciman, who writes to give his life 'a form, a narrative, a chronology', I write to find meaning.

Rick Bass is an American memoirist, essayist and novelist. In the following extract from 'To Engage the World More Fully, Follow a Dog' he shares his writerly world, how his hound catapults him to engage in the world more fully. He says:

I never set out to write a whole book about my dog Colter, much less two books, but he was such a force, such a marvellous animal and taught me so much – about hunting, certainly, but about barely controllable and indomitable passion as well – that in his absence my pen has been moving and even now has not yet ceased.

Ours was a complex relationship, certainly ... The why of the relationship is simple: a dog such as my great Colter can find a hidden bird – a pheasant, a sharp-tailed grouse, a bobwhite quail – where I cannot, where I would walk right on past. The why is easy: using a great dog like Colter is the most efficient, as well as most exhilarating, way to find the birds.

Like Bass who keeps his eye on the dog, I follow the dog – whichever the object that forms my dog, and I follow it to find the bird – whichever the object that forms my bird.

My own inward journey begins with the senses. I engage with the sensual (sight,

smell, touch, taste...), and the emotive (panic, restraint, love, pain, hate...). Creative writing has always offered me a safe place to interrogate things, even complex and unsettling themes.

The unconscious process of how I write – which differs all the time because I am an adventurous writer – is galvanised by an earnestness to get in touch with that very subconscious that compels me to write.

Let me share with you a story:

Rozaria's Memories

The past, like mine, can be another place, continuously another time. My history is as a child of diverse countries, one of which – the country of my birth – does not tolerate multi-citizenship. While my heart might hold tradition (diluted in remembrance and practice), and I might value heritage, I am adapted to new ways of thinking, of being. A new culture permeates the deep-rooted. What now exists is a hybrid culture. But what is culture? Whose culture?

In his review of Richard Fox's 'Lions of the Punjab: culture in the making' (1985), critic Frank Perlin discusses the idea in social disciplines that cultures are each unique and resistant to comparison, forged from within, from without. The African 'tribe' or Indian 'village', for example, is no longer the survival of a distant, more 'pure' or coherent past; rather each is subject to the 'dissolving acids of modernity'. So I have always pondered about culture.

My family history spans many lands and traditions, and a city upbringing has displaced tribal language from my tongue, has thinned custom. I am a hybrid.

'Rozaria's Memories' is a story I wrote about my grandmother. It is real life writing, biographical. I was desperate to write this story, to clasp and bestow permanency through text to those things, like culture, like family, physically distanced from me.

The writing was brave, fraught with panic. I questioned over and over how my family would receive it, in particular some naked truths. What structure or direction might the narrative take? Scattered stories; whose story? In hemming the story within personal history from the eyes of my maternal grandmother on her deathbed, I was able to uncloak Rozaria's

story. I mended it, fabricated it, created my own pattern, decorated it with detail and wore it as mine. Her story became my story. I yarned a brand new design from the original. I was her biographer, her seamstress, an artisan who creates. Recollection was patched, darned, colour-matched.

Let me share with you an excerpt:

She never felt that finger of doubt, that claw in the gut that gripped most fresh brides. Even when Lazaro took her fist, a fist because Rozaria was impatient but unprepared for his reach, finding no time to unfold her fingers into something yielding and clasping his, she never felt trapped. She remembers the old women's laughter, sharp as whistles, and her own mother's closed face. She remembers the stray dog scrounging for scraps in the courtyard, his tail wag, wagging, wagging as Lazaro led Rozaria into a newly built hut.

She quivered at his approach, fearful of how he might initiate her into the real world of marriage. He took her masterfully, firmly. He was skilled and clinical like the fisherman he was. She submitted, because that was how she was raised: to submit. But he was also kind and affectionate in the way he brought down her shield of innocence. His touch dismissed everything she had heard or witnessed about the formidability of men, males like her father whose approach struck only fear in her. What Lazaro made her feel was not fear.

Afterwards, in soft, smoky silence that left no words behind, soft because the moon's shine was wan and smoky because her husband had rolled up a tobacco stick and was drawing on it, Lazaro continued to caress her with his eyes. She felt fragile and whole, and just then, only then – not sooner – did she dare touch him. She reached and lightly touched that strong jaw and those smiling lips the colour of rich berries.

Outside, the women's laughter was no longer sharp or panicked. The mirth was this time belly-deep and wholesome

until the sound of village drums drowned it. Pom! Pom! Pom pi pom pi!
Our son has found a maiden! began a chorus.
A nymphette from the lake.
The begetter of our offspring!
Snug in her husband's arms, Rozaria didn't mind the mosquitoes biting the inside of her leg. She wondered if her curiosity about Lazaro would ever end. She was still wondering when he left her just before dawn to cast his fishing net into the mist of the lake.

While crafting 'Rozaria's Memories', I fabricated questions that influenced outcome. My bias as the biographer resurfaced in relation to the types of questions I posed. My respondents – family members – in turn offered their own bias in the recollections they chose, and from which perspective they told them. While their memories contained facts, like names of places and people, there were multiple elements of point of view, of reminiscing that included personal feeling or thought.

In hindsight I understand that shared history, family member perceptions of Rozaria and events surrounding her life can never be an absolute match. Notwithstanding historical data, email or verbal affirmations, even photographic evidence, 'Rozaria's Memories' is a statement of diversity.

Her story is birthed from many stories, the narrations of other family members, and then positioning by the biographer. Original thought, already corrupted in recall and interpretation, mingles with secondary perception, truth as each narrator sees it. Each introspection is subjective, its truth not wholly reliant on the verbal, visual or written but rather on derived meaning. 'Rozaria's Memories' illustrates biography as a re-creation, an 'other' perspective.

As a biographical piece, it is a story that reveals self and form through storytelling. It engages the reader, invites them to witness an act of recounting and reminiscing where subjectivity is not flawed. The storyteller applies selectively a structural approach as determined not by the subject but by the biographer. While the subject(s) of a biography can affirm or dismiss the story, its author plays

the crucial role of crafting, where intention can sway readerly discernment.

Why do I write? I write when I am wrestling with something: a thought, an emotion, a character. In this example the urge to write surfaced, as if in premonition, long before my grandmother died. I set about the story, seeking to demystify tradition, to claim it before it could further diminish. The story closes with:

Rozaria's eyes are burning, burning, burning. So badly, she wants to weep. For sorrow, for joy. She doesn't need Harry's curing. She has seen good times and now it is Tony's turn. She ponders the once animated lake whose then twinkling waters now spread a lick of green contamination by the waterfront. She wonders what memories the murky water carries and if, every so often, Lake Victoria, now tame, stirs and wants to weep. For sorrow, perhaps joy. Human cultures flourished and generations were born, as her fresh water meandered through many lands.

Like the lake, Rozaria has done her work.

'Rozaria's Memories' is a narrative of reminiscing, a burning story whose cultural past influences now. It contemplates knowledge gained through engagement with family, nurtured with upbringing, characterised by openness. It is knowledge, ever evolving.

It remains a cathartic story whose significance grew manifold after the writing with the deaths of key players. Like any biography, there is still room to expand, to develop. But in its simplicity, this written artefact is my metaphor for life.

Because I write to find. ⑩

Eugen Bacon is a PhD candidate in Writing by artefact and exegesis at Swinburne University of Technology. Her short story 'A Puzzle Piece' was shortlisted in the Lightship Publishing (UK) international short story prize 2013 and is published in 'Lightship Anthology 3'. Eugen's creative work 'Being Marcus' and other works are published in 'New Writing, the International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing'.

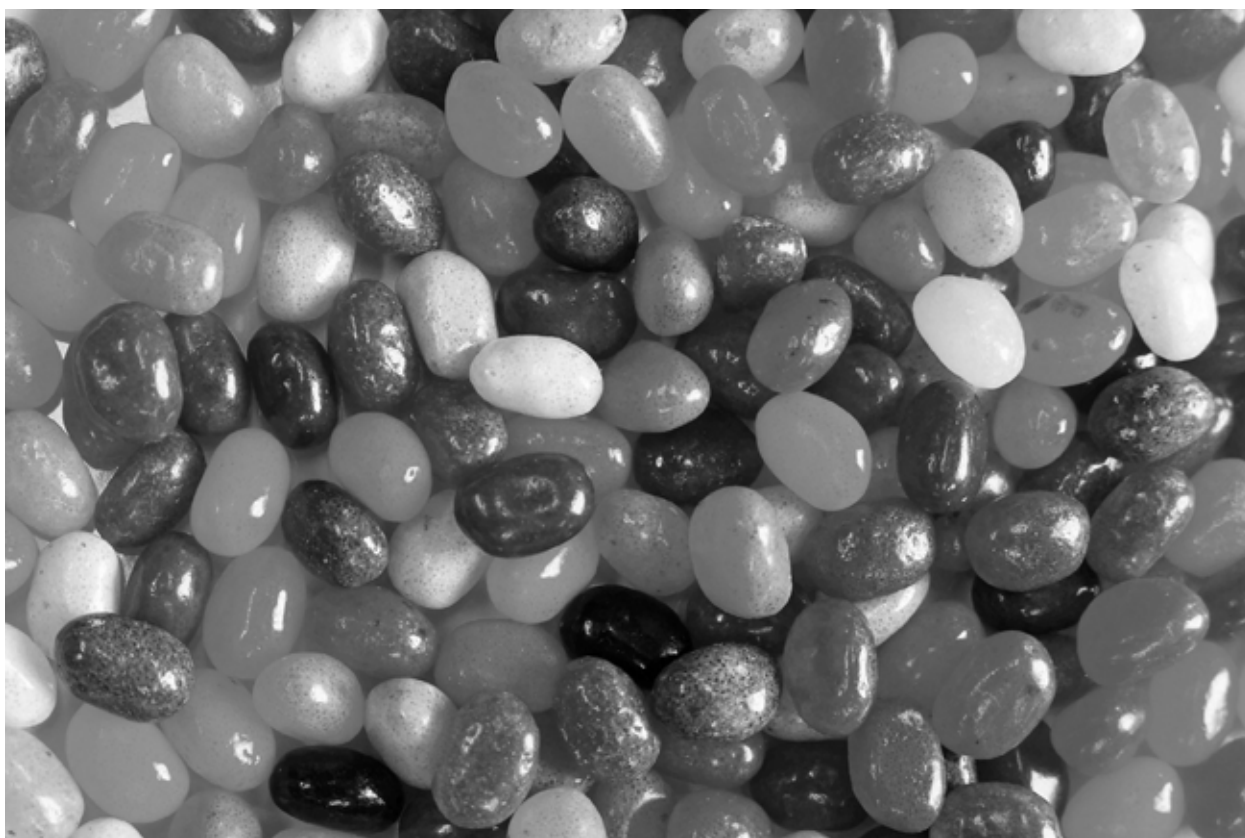
The Nudists Next Door

By Claire Varley

Mostly, we went there for the sweets. Minties, jubes, jelly beans. All kinds of delicate sugary items that we didn't stock at home. This was an unspoken agreement between both parties: we would mince through the gap in the fence line after school or on weekends, and they would allow us to lurk about only as long as it took to rustle up some sweeties from a tin hidden away in some magical place. We were young and they were old, and it was probably all because they'd killed our cat.

They hadn't meant to. It's just that cats have a tendency to run under people's Volvos. Or at least ours did. I have always imagined it was with great sadness that they placed poor

Bilbo's body in the cardboard box on our back stoop to await our return from holidays. I can only assume they reasoned at the time that this was the appropriate thing to do, perhaps unaware that our delayed return date made this a less than ideal homecoming. We'd been on a holiday in a campervan. It was our last holiday with my great uncle before he killed himself not long after. I was three. I remember the cold of Bilbo's body as I petted him in the box, and the slightest memory of ants. All these things suggest this would have been a particularly traumatic period but I don't remember it that way. Perhaps it is my misremembered childhood. Perhaps an inchoate understanding of death, or the fact



that we swiftly became parents to two new replacement kittens. Or perhaps it was the license this suddenly gave us to appear at their backdoor at any time of our choosing with grubby hands outstretched expectantly. They had, after all, killed our cat.

Like all suburban enclaves, ours chattered among itself, the gossip and offhand titbits floated over coffee that children aren't meant to register. They were nudists, we overheard one day, said with the casual indifference of one seeking scandalised pearl-clutching. I imagined this meant that they were people who preferred to walk about their home nude. To me, at five, this seemed like an entirely reasonable inclination, as I much preferred to do the same. I imagined that all their daily chores they performed nude – cooking toast, weeding the garden, reaching for things off high shelves. And that it was only when my brother or I invaded their space that they were forced to shatter their fleshy ambiance and put clothes on. To counter this, we subsequently made sure to always announce ourselves early and loudly, tramping along the rock path like drunken brontosauri to allow them the time to adequately swathe themselves in clothing. With innocent childhood eagerness we would invite our school friends over with such enviable enticements: 'Come to our house to play! We can go next door. That's where the nudists live. They killed our cat. They give us lollies sometimes.'

We called them Auntie and Uncle, the way people do in close-knit neighbourhoods. The way people do despite the fact that this suggests an intimacy that may never be apparent. Unlike my other aunts and uncles, there were few things I knew about them. I didn't know their surname, their occupations, if they had family – real nieces and nephews. I knew they were German and wore those tan masseur sandals with the myriad plastic spikes for massaging the soles, but little more than this. We never saw any other room of their house save for the back living area where we would wait patiently while they rummaged around for sweets.

I think of them often, the kind-hearted nudists who killed our cat then gave us lollies, though this is done through the shrouded fragmented recollection of childhood. The way one thinks about distant acquaintances from times long gone who no longer exist in this world. With a noxious guilt that I know so little about them and the lives they must have lived, only that they were nudists, they'd killed our cat and they were good for sweets more often than not. That this is all I will ever know of them, and it's not nearly enough. Perhaps, as I enter my thirties, it is a longing for suburbia, for familiarity, for something that is not found around our little brick unit wedged between a sub-station, a train station, and a shuttered up home from which every so often an octogenarian Greek man shuffles out craftily to deposit his compost on the cement by the train tracks. For something that seeps away with age, with wisening and cautioning against the world. For something as simple and special as that unspoken agreement signed off each time we scampered up the rock path and extended our little pink hands.

Claire Varley is a writer and community development worker. Her debut novel, 'The Bit in Between' was published by Pan Macmillan in 2015 and she is working on a second novel for release next year.

Milestones

Nola Frawley's poem 'Out brief candle' was highly commended in the Positive Words poetry competition.

Lee Kofman had an extract from her personal essay, 'Me, my mother and Sexpo', from the anthology 'Rebellious Daughters' (Ventura Press), published in 'The Age'.

Tony Mitchell published 'The Lagoon' in October under the nom de plume CM Davis.

Lynette McClenaghan's latest publication is 'Cosmo's Factory Revisited', her first non-fiction publication, following five fiction ebooks. This is a track by track analysis on the lyrics and music of Creedence Clear Water Revival's best album. Now available on Amazon at <http://goo.gl/V3GkmY>

Myfanwy McDonald's story 'Biscuits I have know and loved: A micro-memoir' was published in 'Going Down Swinging' #37.

Michelle Scott Tucker's biography of Anglo-Australian settler and pioneer Elizabeth Macarthur has been acquired by Text Publishing for publication in 2018.

Michelle Vasiliu's picture book, 'My Happy Sad Mummy', which is about a mother who has bipolar, written from the point of view of a young child, has won the 2016 Australian Family Therapist's Award for best picture/young readers book.

Joan Katherine Webster's poems 'Annunciation', 'Memorial to merchandise' and 'Takeover' were published in 'Poetry Matters', Issue 26, March 2016, and 'Macrocosm' was published in 'Poetry Matters', Issue 27, July 2016.

Member benefits

- › Discounts on courses, manuscript assessments, mentorships and writer's studios
- › 'The Victorian Writer' magazine delivered straight to your door
- › Weekly enews filled with writing news, events and opportunities
- › Up to three free listings a year in 'The Victorian Writer' enews
- › Discounts on books for sale on the craft and business of writing
- › Information, advice and guidance from the Writers Victoria team
- › Access to the Writers Victoria library on level 3 of The Wheeler Centre (10am to 5pm weekdays), including a great collection of writing-related reference books, literary magazines, journals, trade weeklies and more
- › Access to a place to write in our library, writer's studios or meeting rooms.
- › Representation and advocacy on issues affecting Victorian writers

writersvictoria.org.au/membership

WRITERS
VICTORIA
All about writers

Classifieds

Pilot Diary 2017

Pilot Diary 2017 is bursting with features! Stay motivated and productive with weekly advice, tips and book recommendations from more than fifty inspiring authors including Benjamin Law, Anna Funder and Inga Simpson. PLUS there's 150 competitions, festivals and awards, a year's worth of writing prompts and tons of industry info. Find Pilot at pilotpress.com.au on Facebook and Instagram

Atport Writers Group

Atport Writers Group, Port Melbourne, will start in 2017. Fiction, creative non-fiction or short story writers will review each other's work to provide friendly and constructive feedback. Meeting fortnightly Thursdays 6-8pm at the library has been proposed. Secure your place early by emailing a short sample of your writing and a blurb about yourself to: atportwg@gmail.com.

Successful applicants will be notified with details from December onwards. All genres, levels and stages of writers are welcome!

Summoning the Whirlwind by Joan Katherine Webster

Joan Katherine Webster's poetry chapbook: 'Summoning the Whirlwind', published by the Melbourne Poets Union, will be launched at the Library Foyer, Mechanics Lane, Castlemaine, on 17 November, 4-6pm.

Advance reviews: 'Her poetry sparkles for us all.' – Chris Wallace-Crabbe.

'Here is a poet in love with language... Be prepared to be equally absorbed.' – Rob Wallis.

For details see:

joanwebsterauthor.com/poetry-2/
facebook.com/events/1827544237517849/

Mindful Relationships

Margie Ulbrick and Dr Richard Chambers

We are now experiencing what is being called 'the mindfulness revolution', as increasingly people become aware of the benefits of mindfulness in all aspects of daily life. This book focuses on individuals, couples, families, groups and businesses to provide a practical guide for using mindfulness to enrich relationships and more effectively manage the stresses associated with dispute resolution and conflict. margieulbrickcounselling.com/books/

Nature of Survival

Doug was made redundant at the age of 63. He decided to travel the Australian outback to start this story. This book is a unique personal story of Doug's life. It is part memoir, part self help. He bravely shares his struggles with depression, redundancy and grief and how his love for the environment has guided his path. It is also a story of love and humour. natureofsurvival.com.au.

The Competition by Caroline Miley

'The Competition' is a historical novel by Melbourne author Caroline Miley. Set in the art and industrial worlds of Georgian England, it explores issues of success and failure, love, sacrifice and exploitation, that are as relevant to today as then. Winner of a Varuna fellowship and a Fellowship of Australian Writers award as an unpublished manuscript, it will be launched by noted author and literary journalist Jane Sullivan at the Victorian Artists Society on 12 December and will be available in online stores from 22 November. www.carolinemiley.com

Competitions and Opportunities

To see ALL the competitions and opportunities we know about, not just the ones we can fit on the page, log in to our special members only section of writersvictoria.org.au.

Smart for a Girl: Roar

Smart For A Girl: Roar is the brainchild of creative collaborators Imogen Banks and Alice Bell designed to address the lack of opportunity for entry-level screenwriters in the television industry.

Smart For a Girl: Roar will teach twelve, uncredited, female writers how an idea is developed into series television through the processes of a writer's room.

endemolshine.com.au/smartforagirl

Closes 16 Dec 2016

Spreading the Word

As part of the celebrated Whittlesea Country Music Festival 2017, Word Weavers is celebrating rural life with a day of storytelling, bush ballads, and a writing competition with entries read aloud at the festival.

Short story/memoir/yarn and bush verse/ballad competition. Theme: Australian Rural/Country Life.

Open, youth and junior sections. All entries must be accompanied by an entry form. \$5 entry fee for each entry in the open section. wchi.com.au

Closes 16 Dec 2016

Boulevard's Short Fiction Contest for Emerging Writers (US)

This is open to people who have not yet published a book of fiction, poetry or creative non-fiction with a nationally distributed press. Stories may be up to 8000 words and must be previously unpublished. The winner will receive US\$1500 and have their story published in the magazine. Entries close 31 December.

boulevardmagazine.org/short-fiction-contest/

Closes 31 Dec 2016

2017 Tasmanian Writers Prize

Open to residents of Australia and New Zealand, the prize is for short stories up to 3000 words having an island, or island-resonant, theme.

The competition is run by Forty South Publishing, the largest book publisher in Tasmania and publisher of 'Tasmania 40° South' magazine.

The winner will receive a cash prize of \$500 and publication in 'Tasmania 40° South'. A selection of the best entries will be published in Forty South Short Story Anthology 2017.

Entry forms and terms can be downloaded from fortysouth.com.au.

Closes 13 Feb 2017

Newstead Short Story Tattoo

Newstead Short Story Tattoo wants your writing, performance, monologues, poems, politics et al for the next event May 5,6,7, 2017. Check the website for full details.

newsteadtattoo.org

Closes 15 Feb 2017

KYD Unpublished Manuscript Award

This award will assist an early-career author in the development of their unpublished manuscript. The award is open to writers of adult fiction and adult non-fiction.

The winner will receive a \$5000 cash prize and a mentorship with KYD's Rebecca Starford (non-fiction) or Hannah Kent (fiction).

killyourdarlings.com.au/awards

Closes 31 Mar 2017

Workshops and Courses

See more courses and book online at writersvictoria.org.au,
phone (03) 9094 7840 or email program@writersvictoria.org.au.
All events are held at The Wheeler Centre unless stated otherwise.

How to Write... about Disability with Fiona Tuomy and Kate Larsen

Have a conversation, not a checklist. Learn about the Social Model of Disability, talk about best-practice, language, advocacy and power. Supported by the Write-ability program. This event is for members of Writers Victoria or the Write-ability program only.

When: Tue 6 Dec, 2-4pm
WV & Write-ability Members:
FREE
Level: All

The Salon Does 2017 With special guest AS Patric Join us for a sneak preview of the literary goodies we'll have coming up for you in the new year.

When: Tue 6 Dec,
6.15pm-8pm
Free event

A Night With Christos Tsiolkas- WV fundraiser Behind every great author is an even greater story of how they made it big – the mistakes and coincidences, rejections and breakthroughs, good and bad luck that they faced along the way.

One of Melbourne's literary superstars, Christos Tsiolkas, will headline our December fundraiser. Hot on the heels of the TV success of 'Barracuda', Christos will talk to WV's Bernadette Schwerdt about his writing journey and first big breaks, and share his tips and tricks for aspiring writers.

The support of our writing community plays an important role in how we fulfil our mission to support Victoria's writers. All proceeds will go towards securing the future of Writers Vic's programs for diverse writers. Even the smallest donation helps us continue the work that we do, and donations of \$2 or more over the cost of the ticket are fully tax deductible. So get inspired for your summer of writing and support the growth of your writing community.

When: Thu 8 Dec, 6.30-8pm
Member price: \$30/\$35
Non-member price: \$50

Business Writing- Persuasive Writing with Jacinta Cubis

Writing is critical to persuade people to do something. Change legislation. Inspire local action. Grant funds. Win a client. Support your cause. Or just get a meeting so you can outline your argument in person. It doesn't matter who you're trying to persuade or what format you're using to convince them. Use real examples and your own work to identify and practise the key elements of persuasive writing needed to convince the reader.

When: Fri 9 Dec, 10am-1pm
Non-profit price:
\$209 (inc GST)
Corp/Govt price:
\$264 (inc GST)

Summer School

Environmental Non-Fiction with Anna Krien

Look at environmental journalism from the success of its pioneers to the difficulties contemporary journalists face today. Learn the essentials of literary non-fiction, how to identify a compelling and original angle, how to approach research and interviews. Gain insights on how to improve your craft and make your writing honest and engaging.

When: Thu 12 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

Writing Romance with Alli Sinclair

What makes a romance story memorable? How does a writer tap into a reader's emotions and take them on an unforgettable journey? Find out how to write deeply emotional stories and create chemistry between characters. Learn how to write a stand-out query letter and synopsis, and discover what opportunities are available for romance writers in this dynamic and ever-evolving genre.

When: Fri 13 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

Writing TV Drama with Chelsea Cassio

Transform your understanding of TV storytelling by going beyond plot to focus on the emotional journey of your characters. Take a detailed look at the structure of an hour-long episode, with character development, beats, the world of the show, tone, theme and story trends. Discuss how to break into the sector, and the culture of the story room.

When: Sat 14 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

Creating an Author Platform with Patrick Lenton

These days, it's expected that authors represent themselves online via social media, blogs and newsletters. Your author platform can help fulfil a variety of functions, such as increasing discoverability, finding readers, selling books and connecting with a community. Find out what options are available, why you need them and strategies to utilise them.

When: Sun 15 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

Writing and Your Body with Leah Kaminsky

The body has always been a rich source of inspiration for writers. Draw on texts and exercises to help give voice to your own physical experience and explore how stories can be used as a powerful tool for both healing and creativity.

When: Mon 16 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

Writing the End of the World with Alice Robinson

Stories often grow from place. But what happens when the places you are writing about are degraded, decayed or destroyed? Find out how to begin your 'cli-fi' novel, explore research, character, structure, theme and setting. Immerse yourself in place-based writing and learn to create fiction with apocalyptic and dystopian elements. Please bring laptops and ideas for a work-in-progress.

When: Tue 17 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

Intro to Memoir with Lee Kofman

Discuss the role of emotional honesty in writing about ourselves and learn some of the basics of this popular writing genre: how to find the right theme or focus, how to structure your life story so that it makes for engaging reading, how to turn yourself and the people in your life into compelling characters, and how to seduce your readers by vividly describing your experiences.

When: Wed 18 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

Fictive Expressions with AS Patric

Build an understanding of the unique qualities of various literary forms (poetry and creative non-fiction, short stories, novellas and novels) and how each offers new creative perspectives and possibilities. Study craft and technique, character development and narrative function, voice and tone,

ideas and aesthetics with a focus on how we deploy our skills practically.

When: Thu 19 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

The Ethics of Using Real Stories in Fiction with Laura Jean McKay

Everybody has a story. From the stories of your family to a dream you once had, from a small newspaper clipping to the events that changed a life, this workshop will take you on a journey through the writing process – bringing your ideas to the page and turning them into exciting prose. Through workshopping, exercises and group discussions you will produce stories, and explore the ethics and logistics of using real stories in fiction.

When: Fri 20 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

Insight into Editing with Penny Johnson

Considering a career in editing? Explore the work editors do today, illuminate editing processes and learn the key tools, techniques and tricks of the trade. Refresh your grammar and punctuation, and improve your ability to copyedit and proofread at a line level. Emerge with a swag of new skills and knowing what your next steps might be.

When: Sat 21 Jan, 10am-4pm
Member price: \$135/\$145
Non-member price: \$195
Level: Early and emerging

DIY Podcast

with Kelly Gardiner

Learn how to share the love through podcasts, the hugely popular medium which is changing the way we engage with words. Hear about the purposes of podcasts, learn how to plan and program a series of episodes and how to write a script. Tackle some practical questions about recording, editing and delivering your podcast to listeners anywhere in the world.

When: Sun 22 Jan, 10am-4pm

Member price: \$135/\$145

Non-member price: \$195

Level: All

Your Digital Publishing Options

with Dr Euan Mitchell

Take charge of connecting with your readers via the new array of options for making and marketing ebooks and print books. Learn how to make quality ebooks from your computer for free. Learn how to publish ebooks via Kindle (Amazon), Apple, Kobo, Barnes & Noble, and other ebook retailers. Discover how print-on-demand services can minimise printing bills and make hard copies of your book available globally. This workshop requires familiarity with Microsoft Word on a laptop or notebook computer. iPads and Android tablet computers are not suitable.

When: Mon 23 Jan, 10am-4pm

Member price: \$135/\$145

Non-member price: \$195

Level: Early and emerging

Children's Books with a Social Conscience

with Zana Fraillon

Whether it's a picture book, middle grade fiction or young adult novel, authors have the ability to encourage children to discover the types of adults they want to become. Discover how kids' books can discuss important social issues while still maintaining the ability to delight, engage and entertain.

When: Tue 24 Jan, 10am-4pm

Member price: \$135/\$145

Non-member price: \$195

Level: Early and emerging

Poetry – The Foundations

with Ali Alizadeh

Discover the basics for becoming a successful poet. Consider the form or genre of poetry, and how a poem is different to other forms of writing. Explore contemporary Australian poetry, and consider the work of some of Australia's leading contemporary poets. Participants are welcome to bring samples of their writing for discussion.

When: Wed 25 Jan, 10am-4pm

Member price: \$135/\$145

Non-member price: \$195

Level: Early and emerging

Writers on Wednesdays

The Narratives of Climate Change

with Tony Birch

Discover the variety of ways that writers are responding to the challenge of climate change across fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction. Discuss the modes of communication for both practitioners and readers, and how to produce outcomes that suit particular audiences.

When: Wed 25 Jan, 6-7.30pm

Member price: \$30/\$40

Non-member price: \$55

Level: All

Online

Digital Memoir Intensive

with Jo Case

How do you tell your story and hold a reader's attention? What's unique about your experience, and why do you want to share it? Discover what memoir can achieve at its best, and some common pitfalls to avoid. Get a comprehensive, nuts-and-bolts view from structure and storytelling, to how to create characters, using tools of memory, and navigating the tricky ethical territory of writing about people you know. Tackle your project through a combination of webinars and submissions of your own work. Theoretical components will be taught in conjunction with practical exercises and you'll also be given feedback on your work to make your writing stronger.

Webinars: Mon 30 Jan, 27 Feb, 27 Mar, 24 Apr, 29 May, 26 Jun

Member price: \$600/\$620

Non-member price: \$720

Level: Emerging

Membership Form

To renew
online, visit
bit.ly/1TgVUxx

WRITERS
VICTORIA

Name Membership number (if applicable)

Organisation or writers group

Postal address

Email

☐ Please tick if you do not wish to receive our enews*
*We will not supply or sell your information to a third party.

Suburb Phone

Postcode State Gender ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

Age (optional) ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18–25 ☐ 26–34 ☐ 35–44 ☐ 45–54 ☐ 55–64 ☐ 65+

At what stage of writing are you?

☐ Early (just begun) ☐ Emerging (some publication) ☐ Established (published a full-length work)

What do you write, or what would you like to write?

<input type="checkbox"/> Academic	<input type="checkbox"/> Crime	<input type="checkbox"/> Literary fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Radio	<input type="checkbox"/> Web content
<input type="checkbox"/> Biography/Memoir	<input type="checkbox"/> Essays/Reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> Lyrics	<input type="checkbox"/> Romance	<input type="checkbox"/> Young adult
<input type="checkbox"/> Blog	<input type="checkbox"/> Family history	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Screenwriting	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Business/Technical	<input type="checkbox"/> Feature writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Playwriting	<input type="checkbox"/> Short stories	
<input type="checkbox"/> Childrens	<input type="checkbox"/> Graphic novels	<input type="checkbox"/> Poetry	<input type="checkbox"/> Speculative fiction	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copywriting	<input type="checkbox"/> Journalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Popular fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel	

Do you identify as:

☐ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse ☐ Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander ☐ Person with Disability

Join for two years and save

☐ Individual \$135 ☐ Writers groups and organisations \$260
☐ Concession \$100 ☐ Regional \$90

One-year memberships

☐ Individual \$75 ☐ Writers groups and organisations \$145
☐ Concession \$55 ☐ Overseas individual (Online, no GST) \$75
☐ Regional \$50

How would you like to receive
The Victorian Writer magazine?

☐ PDF by email
☐ Text only by email
☐ Hard copy by post

Payment advice (all prices include GST except overseas membership)

Membership amount \$ ☐ Cheque/Money order attached ☐ Please charge my Visa/Mastercard

Tax deductible donation \$ Card number M M / Y Y

Total payable \$ Name Signed

Find out more about what it means to be part of an association on our website at <http://bit.ly/1MQAcQt>

35

T
V
W



Words in the world

2017 / Season 1

Program online at writersvictoria.org.au

WRITERS
VICTORIA

All about writers