

Meniscus



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Meniscus is pleased to announce a special issue of our journal, set for release in February 2016. [You can find more information here.](#)

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About Meniscus

Meniscus is a literary journal, published and supported by the Australasian Association of Writing Programs (AAWP) with editors from the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. The title of the journal was the result of a visit made by two of the editors to the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, where James Turrell's extraordinary installation, 'Within without' (2010), led them to think about how surfaces, curves, tension and openness interact. In particular, they were struck by the way in which the surface of the water features, and the uncertainty of the water's containment, seems to analogue the excitement and anxiety inherent in creative practice, and the delicate balance between possibility and impossibility that is found in much good writing.

Australian Copyright Agency

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Editorial

Does writing give shape to the ineffable? In this the fifth edition of *Mensicus* it seemed the answer was a tentative 'yes'. In putting the edition together, we were struck by how the writing here gravitated towards the tricky questions of existence or mortality, and to the multiple ways that memory gives shape to a life. Combined with this was a concern with place, either as landscape (physical, spiritual, or mental), or as some representative, some form, some marker, of the ideas, images, feelings and narratives that the pieces presented here hope to convey. There's a depth of meaning to these works of poetry and short fiction that a seemingly simple veneer at times belies.

Mensicus was started in 2013 by the Australasian Association of Writing Programs (AAWP) partly as a way of giving space to innovative writing from our region and the broader international writing community. We are pleased to note a genuine international representation here, building on the established interest in Australia, New Zealand and the UK, with a significant number of contributions from the US. We also publish here our youngest ever writer: E Wen Wong, age 12!

We note, too, that as the journal grows and matures other opportunities open to refresh its focus and energy. We are pleased to announce that the first issue of 2016 will be themed, 'Beyond the Divide', and be guest edited by Dr Dallas Baker from the University of Southern Queensland. This special issue will focus on writing from the other side of divides, geographical, political, linguistic or cultural. It seeks work from regional, rural and remote writers, either living or originating from places beyond the capital cities and key centres of their nation or region.

As ever, we are indebted to the Australian Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund for enabling us to pay fees to all contributors, whose work we are pleased to introduce.

Jen Webb, Gail Pittaway, Paul Munden, and Paul Hetherington, with Shane Strange

Mensicus Editors

Dominique Hecq

April by the sea

‘We’ll never belong,’ says my Moroccan friend as we watch the procession of the palms unfolding on the car-park of the Maronite cathedral adjacent to ExQuisine.

‘Oh, really?’ Fictitious or real the words waft and drift away.

There is a cold wind blowing in from the sea, merging memory with the rush hour fumes in Normanby Avenue and the last belch of the day from the food factory across the road—ExQuisine, a most infelicitous name. Our neighbour, a handyman, is burning bits of wood, carpet off-cuts, plastic containers and rubber that fill the air with a dark foul smoke. I get up and close the window. In the distance, the clouds remind me of snow clouds, only this is Melbourne in mid-April. Soon, the clouds will smother the city skyline, the three golden domes of the Russian Orthodox church and the tree-tops arching over the Merri Creek. The temperature has dropped fifteen degrees in a day and I welcome the cool change, but the acrid smell of the smoke has crept in my fiction room and it overcomes me like weather.

‘Can you imagine,’ I say, ‘the security guards are *leading* the procession. And look. Look at those huge palm limbs standing to attention.’

‘Yes, and look at the youths filming this ceremony. It’s so rude.’

I can find nothing to reply. I shrug my shoulders, my eyes hovering over the newly concreted car park, recalling the old factory with its smell of baking plastic and, the market gardens oozing greens—baby peas and young beans, snap peas, the foliage of carrots and parsley, onions, silver beet, broccoli, and broad beans that stalked the creek. Three bystanders in jeans, huddling against the back of the cathedral, seemingly hiding from the congregation—an obsolescent cortège of mock brides and bridesmaids and bridegrooms circling the building—catch my eye. I point to them. ‘See these three?’

‘Yes.’

‘They’re like us.’

My friend laughs.

‘They don’t belong,’ I say. ‘Perhaps they don’t *want* to belong.’

‘*May-be.*’

‘They are not interested in the permanence of death, which the faithful so desire.’

‘Sorry?’

‘And make up with rites and ceremonials.’

‘You don’t make sense.’

‘Their hearts hanker for change, not stasis.’

‘Darling, sometimes I think you are a goose.’

‘That makes us a gaggle.’

‘What’s got into you?’

‘Too much time on my hands.’ I show off my palms, filthy as they are with ink and walnut stains. But she doesn’t get the joke.

‘Ah, well. The boys—meaning my four boys and their father—‘must be coming back soon.’

‘Yes. They’re watching the game with their mates. They’ll be back for dinner.’

‘I brought some olives and figs and *paté*. And some lavosh.’

‘Great. We’ve got sardines to grill, aioli, baba ghamoush, hommus, baguette, homebrew for the boys and Riesling for us.’ Yes, I resist the phrase ‘for the ladies,’ never thinking of myself as one.

How we love exploration only to encroach democratically on an other's territory with our cackling, flapping and startling gaggle. Not ardent swans, not convivial ducks, but geese who feed the barbarity of human affairs with creamy *paté de foie gras*. Hissing geese, rather like the English language we've made ours so awkwardly. So many S's. Yessss! See them swerve, these supple sinuous necks. Almost, but not quite, nonchalant swan arch, an arch that ripples with the glitter of water and reflections on the possibility of flight. *Bonsoirrr*. I write looking out of the window from time to time at the dappled clouds receding back towards the bay past the skyline, the swaying trees, the smatter of bats, or birds. A flash of light.

Summer Solstice 2002—St Kilda.

The woman lies parallel to the line of the sea, way away from the water, with her head resting on her arms—a thin, sensually gross, figure in the empty space of sand. Around her the beach crowd in polka dotted bikinis, red and gold swimsuits and board shorts in all shades of blue imaginable sit and chat and run and screech and yell in the heat. As she moves slightly she feels the sand beneath her towel moulding itself to the shape of her body. The sun stings her skin. She is oblivious to the noises of the crowd and to the distant thumping of the waves on the shore.

'Simon, catch!'

The woman turns her head at the sound of the once-familiar name, pushes aside a strand of mousy hair and lies still, watching the young couples as they frolic like children in the clear space of sand. Once, a few years back in late April, she had come here, and it was stark and solitary, with the cold wind and spray from the sea preying on her body. Now the sand is warm beneath her body, and the sun burns into her skin, yet as she watches the young couples tumble and run, tumble and run, she can feel again the biting sea spray of winter. The boys—strangers to her—are strong, with smooth tanned skin and beefy bodies with illustrations inspired by Maori designs. The girls have tattoos too, and rounded breasts and long slim legs. They are playing with a yellow beach ball, throwing it high in the air as if wanting to compete with the sun in the sky, and then running to catch it.

The man is watching the game, too, or he seems to be, for he is really looking beyond them to her. It is the same man, she thinks, straight mousy hair and hazel eyes. He slightly resembles her. She recalls having noticed the resemblance before. Carlton, not St Kilda. Carlton. The name seems to be associated with him. Perhaps the Cinema Nova. Yes. He was with a group of people to the side of her, sitting with his arms resting squarely on his knees outside Brunetti's after the film—a François Ozon film. *Yes, Regarder la Mer / See the Sea*. But he wasn't talking to the others, she noticed. He seemed to be swallowing the noise. She had left straight after coffee, averting his gaze, and had gone home to her empty apartment to listen to *Air*. It is strange to see him again after such a long time.

They watch without watching as the boys decide it is time to swim, pick up the girls in their strong arms and carry them in a flail of arms and legs towards the water. She sits up slowly, as if completely oblivious to the world, and feels into her bag for her book. *Destroy, She Said*. This is the third time she reads it in the English translation. She can't decide why it feels so different from the French—*Détruire, dit-elle*. She always waits until it is her time alone at the desk and then checks out her books for herself. She's on the trail of emotional register this time around. Beyond the crowd she imagines the wide open yellow bay, with its twin headlands curving in slightly and the surf beating on the sand at Sorrento, say, or Point Lonsdale, carrying her off and away. The wind flaps gently in the striped beach umbrellas and only carries fistfuls of noise from the sea and the crowd. In the summer here she can pretend, in the assortment and excitement of the crowd, and she is content. In the absorption of work, too, she finds solace, but once outside the huge, domed library, she is silent. On hot blue days here, she lies in between two reals.

‘Oh, really?’ From the past she can hear her own flat voice as she strolled through the gardens with Simon, her thin goose-bumpy body swinging into step beside him. She liked to walk like this, with the strength of his muscular yet lithe body moving rhythmically beside her, as though he were a companion animal—you are allowed to think of ‘birds of a feather.’ He was talking about the books he’d been reading, laughing about the urban sprawl—a word barely heard of then—arguing for the planned high-rise developments in Melbourne. ‘People want to live, not slither around like snakes or burrow in like ferrets.’

‘That is very amusing,’ she said. ‘Geese no longer migrate or fly.’ She paused. ‘But they were not always so solitary.’

He glanced at her quickly, and changed the topic. She found pleasure simply in the tone of his deep voice.

‘*Say-ling*,’ he said, ‘you must come out with me on the bay one day.’

‘Yes.’

‘On a fine windy day, you’d love it.’

‘Yes.’

‘On a fine windy day with the waves hitting against the prow, and the wind...’

‘Yes,’ she said in the same flat voice.

‘Really. I mean, honestly, it’s not to be missed.’ He turned and took her arm.

In the presence of such unmistakable appraisal of her loves and hates, of such confidence and fluency, she became unsure.

‘Yes. Why, yes.’ Her voice was expressionless and she saw the quick glance he gave again in her direction.

There was no doubt in her heart that she had loved him and still loved him, but their acquaintance was ebbing with the words.

The young boys are now picking their way through the crowd, through the dots and reds and blacks and yellows and blues of costumed bodies sitting and walking and running and jumping. He too, turns to watch them as they stomp in the sand. They bend back under the weight, and the sinews stand out under their muscular armour, the armour that will never contain the word intimacy. From the shallows of the sea comes a slow procession; white-bellied old men, young children with sun-tanned bodies; women whose pink flesh bulges from low-cut costumes grown too small; and young girls with salty straggly hair straight out from some dark communion with the sea.

The woman almost smiles. She could feel the rough taste on her lips, as though she too, has dipped in the sea, but she abstains. She’s not from here and this would make her a fake in her own eyes. The man is now unmistakably staring at her, and so she shifts in her sand-makeshift sarcophagus—what else would you call this perfectly body moulding hollow in the sand? His eyes are sharp, though, a surveyor’s or an architect’s.

‘I am alone,’ she hears. ‘In this crowd and this bustle of sun, sand and sea, I am effing alone.’

Perhaps he is shy and tongue-tied with people, she thinks. Perhaps he tries hard to say something natural and witty, rehearsing the sentence, until it materialises uncomfortably in his mouth. Perhaps he is direct so that what he says is literal and sincere. She glances quickly at him again. She feels she knows him—an uncomfortable kind of person like her, someone with integrity, but no ease. A goose, she decides. He can’t think of the right, easy thing, to say that would span the silence that inhabits her, breaks out, spills over and steams up in the heat, confusing him. Confusing everything.

She turns her body in the other direction, but she can still hear and see him. In front of her a striped beach umbrella is flapping violently with a fresh, gusty breeze, and the woman next to her make shift sarcophagus raises the hood on her baby's pram. Down the beach she can make out the forms of the two couples with illustrated bodies. The wind is picking up, whipping the sand across the sand and she shivers as it blows against her skin.

The man, she thinks vaguely in alarm, looks as though he is about to speak to her. He moves as though to stand up. This is when she loses her balance. With her heart beating and her eyes stinging, she gathers her belongings and stands up. Then with a casual air, April cranes her sinuous neck and slings her bag over her shoulder, picking her way through the crowd.

Sarah Penwarden

Psychotherapist's holiday

I wake and know
the tide has come and gone
while I slept; inhaling, exhaling,
my unconscious
companion.

On the sea's surface
I trace patterns of blue -
from ice-white to pipi-shell grey
to indigo stones sunk
deep into rock pools.

In the shapes of the
Sugar Loaf islands I see Paritutu
as a woman turning her neck,
the Saddleback rock rearing up
in the foam.

Each day it's become
my profession to beach-comb;
to walk the sand washed smooth
of footprints, as a mind
wiped clean of regrets.

Linda Godfrey

prussian blue chromium yellow

imagine, imagine plunder to fake a story decorated with stone flowers, to inflate their exploits. doing spat, doing spat five pm friday eveningtide. hand-blown glass bottle on a mantelpiece lights the night soft glow until dawn or when the inhabitants wake to the green turned violet jacaranda tree, drain fish for a popular drink, a sugar corinthian pediment girl walks dust paths, comes around the strelitzia, the hiss and blow from the factories across the way (what are they doing in there?) whine of mosquito, light is leached - a fading from blue lounge, shaker chairs, darksome carpets to the twenty-first century rumble of buses and planes, a remark a child has been to north korea? pakistan? sinai? really? you want to be on those stones. j'ai fait les courses, j'ai acetée des vetements et le soir j'ai dinée avec des amis. yes, yes, we're all so busy. chirrup of the baby noisy mynas down for the bunting season, divine the rooms, dress in their clothes, raid the hoard, camera, clocks, tarnished silver, a hot bath, sit down at the table. chicken for dinner, the béarnaise, the brie, small green figs, port in the dogleg defensive library. many hands raised stroke to a quiver

early morning early morning. the little love jerk of the ear, tea, gravel, blind ocean, and waits like my wine like my wine, all towers tell bountiful poise perms, a most thrilling thing. charge right in without paying, as-tu une voiture? non, j'ai pris le bus my fardel is palmetto me, is palmetto me, a suprise party for a lily in an alaskan rumble, a kingbolt blue witch hiding in the insectorium settles back into the violet and vanilla tinted walls, marble fireplace laced with black and white the light outside casts its chromium yellow light full of agile tales of stories of new neighbours shooting out the street lights every time they're replaced, of sunburn recycled on sunday drives, of guiletta's balcony, of fights, soundless laughter, of small plastic hand-painted horses wrapped in hair bands, of drinking, of washing, of leavings and returns, of sunday papers thrown aside, eyes too tired to read, of times on the couch listening to bach. may is the slimiest, quietest egg of the year for me, sound correspondence, sound correspondence is two thousand loose young animals back in detective force, two thousand and thirteen all tumbling down down to the river's edge. It's a gaussian blur, change the blend mode to soft light.

Anastasia Stelse

Pool at the corner of Toulouse and North Rampart

Our friend Nancy pulls herself over pool edge,
rests her butt on the tiles covering the coffin
we call Jo, short for Joseph, Jolene, or maybe

Josefina—we can't be sure the gender or the race.
There are others, cement-sealed under our pool's
splash zone, waterlogged beneath the table.

Contractors hit the first of fifteen barely four feet
below us, wood swollen and bruised with mud.
I waited for the lids to crack in the sun, split like

overripe bananas to reveal bones floating in individual
boats. Last month my brother said, don't you ever
worry your splashing on their graves might anger them?

I did not say that on quiet Sunday evenings when I swim
with my three-year-old, she presses her ear to the tiles,
giggles. She tells me they swim in their clothes.

Coffin at the corner of Toulouse and North Rampart

Water constantly gurgles.
Sounds of whale songs vibrate
damp wood, tickle my
vertebrae. Swaying in linen
and liquid, my bones
make their own music
and sometimes clinks
or slap-flaps from above
play percussion. Today,
a muffled voice so near
it could have been my
daughter, echoes. She likes
the French songs, she tells me.
I teach her *Tourdion*,
play my bones as melody.

Margaret Moores

Moments

My father buttons my cardigan in the kitchen but when I begin to cry, he carries me back to my bed. The only significance in this might be in the detail of the curling feathers emerging from the eiderdown, or perhaps arms; being carried. One wall was scarlet, the other yellow. It was from about this time that I began to compile memories, numbering each one to keep them in order. Thus, cardigan is followed by the bookcase in the sitting room. Years later, I cannot go to sleep without reading. Routines are good for children. There was a large garden with fruit trees and a flowering apple by the front gate. We were required to be quiet if there was a headache. When I compared notes with sisters, one mentioned the brass shavings from our father's lathe that embedded themselves in the soles of her bare feet, another recalled the smell of chlorine in the water dripping from her hair as she lay on the hard white concrete at the swimming pool. As I sprawled across my unmade bed and chose names for the characters in my novels, I did not realise that I might have reconstructed my life independent of the others.

Rose gardens

We had a long bookcase made from bricks and planks; when it was full, we made another. I studied Laurence Sterne and then George Eliot. My books were full of pencilled marginalia. Years later, I recall the path above the Rose Gardens. I was teaching myself how to be alone while all the greens dissolved into blue shadows. For another class, I memorised Hopkins and Yeats. There was no future in such recitation, but still I did not throw them away. It seemed essential at that point to have sex, just as eventually it became essential to be pregnant. I was only pretending to be indifferent. Many of our books were the same, but his had the more interesting notes. If you had no money, you could eat noodles. When paperbacks get old they are like birds; their feathers flutter to the ground as you open them. I found my grandmother's Messiah; I had hoped for her annotations, but every page was clean. In those days you had to pretend to be married if you wanted to live together so I bought a silver ring for my left hand. Every night, a domestic drama played in the uncurtained kitchen windows. Is reality the antidote to literature? He was writing a dissertation on *Lolita* which he never finished. The manuscript followed us from house to house until one day, she simply vanished.

Not everyone was happy

In the afternoons we all took a nap, clambering later out of silty dreams, sticky with sleep. The sigh of a trolley bus going up the hill. It seemed sometimes, that women became their playground selves again, taking sides. We all had husbands and pushchairs, but not everyone was happy. You cannot make boys play with dolls. I had imagined a daughter, always holding a book. Are pink, plastic, water-pistols permissible? My father used to take me out on frosty nights to see satellites, so I took the four year old from his bed to look for Halley's Comet. I measured nights in minutes of sleep because none of them liked the dark. All the greens dissolving into blue shadows. The oldest offered to watch television so that I could read. I wasn't bored, but I did want more time to think. The mobile library parked beside the Post Office and then the swings. I learned to walk slowly again, one foot in front of the other, looking at fire engines and big trucks. Later, they all denied that I had ever read to them. The women visited each other's houses so that the children could play. We examined our lives over and over while we breastfed our babies. One used to bite; looking me in the eye when I screamed. He seemed amused rather than startled. Such tiny fingers.

Phillip Hall

Waterlily light well

The Wet Season's first rain
is a buckjumper's cock-a-hoop eight-second rattle
flushing free
Barrawulla's space in white plumage and upswept sulphur crest
as pent-up raucous screech blooms
spear grasses and the thrown elongated green hues
casting to salmon-pink and deepening rust-coloured streaks:

bats and more birds return from the north
riding fat highways
of morning glory clouds
as thick life again floods
from Karranjinni's limestone cliff-cradled
swamps and billabongs:

and every afternoon there's abundance
in the sky percolating
this ancient seabed
of squeezed silica blocks
raised as vertical fractures and gouged
into chasms and pancaked towers – the stacked
havens of rock figs, grevilleas and palms – as Barrawulla sharpens
his powerfully curved bill on his *lost cities* home,
his mandibles articulated for crushing and tearing
a landscape's hunted wood-boring grubs:

Jagududgu's flightless sprawling
odyssey arrives in loose grey-brown and black quilled
law, highbrowing bright blue to bestow
on Barrawulla's billabong
sweet waterlily for song:

in this preened and chiseled country
the Yanyuwa and Gudanji bind in spirit form:
one a turbulently swept red coastal silt,
the other a limestone's cradled gold alluvium.

This confluence of ochre-enriched law
is pooled in Barrawulla's bedrock when evaporation
draws iron to surface –
the inside-story's business backbone of this place.

Borroloola class

for Noela Anderson

You open early, wooing
them with air-conditioned
promise in the beginning of light
and watching through glass
saturated thermals resounding
as a low rolling highway of cloud
channeled from the Gulf and piped
the horizon long, so amidst
the closed in busy teasing and pranks
you challenge and distract gathering
rapport as nana growls: *hey you mob*
listen now an show mista dat cloud
so as the class calms, Blaze gets crackin':
millad mob know dat Julayarriyarri
an he bring rain an all dem bats an birds
dem old people did tell us dat, poor fullas,
an if you come modaka out bush wid millad mob
us dance dat storm like kardu buckin' bullocky –
a screwed-up muscle-sprung bellowed barrel
like a didged rodeo's cheerin' mental-as-anything king.

Ken Cockburn

Schedule

We stand on the front-step
depressed into a smile
by a century or more
of comings and goings

and buzz. While we're waiting
we read the names
attached to the stone
beneath obsolete bell-pulls,

then climb a stair
thick with bicycles and silence
towards the green light
of a top landing.

Inside, we measure
the precision of downloads
against these rooms
we could muddle through for years –

dimensions and outlooks,
shelving and storage,
the life we've already begun
to imagine leading.

Elsewhere

From the train I see a woman
walking a path through green grain.

A low midsummer moon rises.
A crow sits on a fence-post.

Outside the station
a bus promises Heartease.

*

In the morning I pass
a barefoot riverside sleeper

and a line-tangled bat
dying in daylight.

A breeze flickers
the silver birch.

*

A snatch of
But when my ship is far at sea

and you know not where I am
the busker's song.

White stones on the grass
define a labyrinth.

John Grey

From a shack in the desert

Denver plays solitaire out on the deck.
Sun goes down behind the mountains.
The peaks are crowned, yellow, red and orange.
Shadow drops from leather brow to ace of diamonds.
Wind picks up, empty-handed but for darkness.

Maybe this is the game where he wins against himself.
But, like the landscape, cards are tough.
Numbers never fall right, suits can't get together.
May as well be the five of cactus, the seven of rock,
the queen of rattle snakes, the jack that's baked hard earth.

Yet what can a man do with a losing game
but reshuffle the deck, deal himself more of the same.
Meanwhile, the terrain plays its last hand before the lights go out.
It'd win for sure but for one card, Denver on his deck,
playing solitaire. So who left the joker in the desert's pack?

Liam Guilar

Cave art

Balanced between the fire and the over-hanging wall,
curved and fractured as it falls to where the little streams
fill the cave with sounds that shift like
long hair falling down your naked back,
muscles flexing, reaching with the stick,
I chanted while you danced
and we drew creatures from the chalk.
The lines flowing from the wall
grew flesh in shadow, moved towards the light.

Susan Gillett

EARTH SONNET (after Shakespeare, XXXIII)

wish i could show you all that i have seen;
wish i could make you see it through my eye:
you only wish to see horizons green –
i am the scars that track your alchemy.
across my space i've felt you rise and ride,
blazing your dust-heeled story on my face,
until there is no place here left to hide
from all the littered signs of your disgrace.

i have no cause to make me blow and shine –
it's you who favour combat, brow to brow
or drone to drone – i take no sides but mine;
i play by rules that you've ignored; so now
that time is up, do not fear my disdain:
i will survive you, though i wear your stain.

Christina Lloyd

Manila

Where my mother and grandmother were brought to replace
a daughter lost to Japanese bombs, a wife lost to rabies.

Where we swam in hotel pools when our father came to visit—
air con in his rooms so strong it burnt our lungs.

Where red ants clamped down on my pigeon toes wriggling
in corrective shoes my mother couldn't unlace fast enough.

Where I marveled at the heart of the banana plant, the lithe bodies
of the *butiki* traveling the walls at night.

Where a cane toad sprayed our poodle dead. Where gamecocks
lunged at each other in the pit, blades strapped to their feet.

Where I carried a bucket of snake eggs into the house, startling
a masseuse rubbing baby oil into my mother's back.

Molly Drake speaks to her son Nick

I remember firelight, you remember smoke.
-M.D.

I tried so very hard to convince you
of life's brightness, its gifts. You were my gift.
I gave you your small nose and full lips,
nudged your chords along till you strummed

strong, marvelous songs. Everybody said so.
London had you for twenty pounds
a week, that Hampstead flat you couldn't keep
and that was that. I like to picture you

alone in your room murmuring Blake's verses
into the sound hole of your guitar. But then I hear
your fingernails rasp on a fret and must catch
my breath. Your last days still smell of petrol,

still taste of tryptizol. My voice strains to sing
soprano now. Most days I deliver fan letters
to the oak you're buried beneath; in return you let me
pluck poems from your gorgeous, open mouth.

Shé Hawke

Brief-cased girl

She's a brief-cased girl.

Pockets

 pouches

and crevasses

 mark the body of her text,

soft fawny exterior

 slightly stained

 veined and wrinkled

with a darker, warm

 velvet interior

 a little torn and worn

from rough

 peak-hour handling

 feeling for the right bits

held together

 with a secret zip

and a

 click

 clack

 lock.

E Wen Wong

Lost and found

Midnight
I sail
the dark sky,
guiding
a lost star.

Jay Kylie Ludowyk

Silk slippers

You who have never screamed for what you want, you are envied.

Your mother would have waited until you were six, but even at five you were a masochist.

‘*Lien-hua*,’ she say, ‘we wait one year more,’ and her smile is chiffon.

You had not yet learned to rend that material but you knew who could. From him you had your first pair of silk slippers, darkest blue with cinnamon embroidery, though your feet did not yet mirror their lotus-petal shape.

‘*Bà*, please,’ you beg.

As often as he denies *Mama*, he indulges you. A daughter who embraces the pain that will make her worthy. He was right to name you Lotus Flower, he says, and calls for the binder. *Mama* turns her face away, acceding gracefully, as in all things, and the feeling that it is you she accedes to is familiar.

You remember the binding. None forget.

‘You begged for this,’ *Mama* says, as though begging your forgiveness. Her refusal to leave makes the binder scowl, silently, as you have two younger sisters. ‘Think of something else, *Lien-hua*.’ The bones in your palm grind under her hold. It is almost as painful.

Pluck lotus petals in your mind. Lay them out as a path across the bamboo mats. When next you pluck them your feet will eclipse the tear-drop petals perfectly.

‘Every step a lotus,’ *Bà* always says when he sees you petal-stepping. He made *Mama* show you the game. It was then you understood your namesake.

And you are right. When you can walk without flinching, you master the petal path.

At fifteen the matchmaker comes. She is known for the sharp creases in the folds of her napkins when she serves tea. But she is matchmaker and rarely does she serve. You are only a shadow, hiding with wall, when she first asks *Mama* not *is she beautiful*, but *how small are her feet?* In demure defiance—you have not been called—lotus-step forward so that she might see your worth for herself. She nods approvingly, eyes on your silk slippers, defiance paling against cinnamon blue.

Mama dismisses you with one of her smiles, this one of velvet rubbed wrong. Once you stood by her side comparing your slippers to hers. Same smile. You had thought to make her happy so you said, as *Bà* taught, ‘There are a thousand buckets of tears for one who binds her feet. A thousand more for a woman of the street.’

Mama, she brings herself down, steadying herself by hold of your shoulders. ‘*Lien-hua*, I should like to walk on the street.’

Patting the side of her cheek, thinking to indulge her, you reply that you would ask *Bà* for the sedan-chair so that you and *Mama* might ride to—

‘Walk, *Lien-hua*. Not be carried.’

Woman of the street had meant only that until several years later. Now you understand what *Bà* meant, but are only just beginning to understand *Mama*.

The matchmaker talks of the *Letter of Advice to Queen Victoria* as she watches *Mama* carefully. Everyone talks of little else. Imperial Commissioner *Tse-Hsu* had written to the English Empress to stop sending *yāpiàn* to *Zhong Guo*. He said that China sends Britain tea, porcelain, spices and silk, while Britain sends only the opium poison in return. The Emperor has forbidden its use. Trading in the *yāpiàn* incurs the highest penalty.

This is of small interest to you until *Tse-Hsu's* men come. You are taking tea with *Mama* and *Bà*. *Mama* serves. They take *Bà* away.

Most *gē jì*, singing courtesan, train from childhood. So when the matchmaker will not return you are grateful they accept you, but soon your smile wears thin. Who would turn away a Lotus Flower?

The house has many courtyards with elms that turn red when it snows and you sit by the door and reach out your hand to the frost. Fingers numb, one palm cups your cheek. Watch the cloud of your breath weave through fingers held before lips, the warmth blissfully stinging, blushing life into the numbness.

You chose the room because it faces roofs of yellow tiles.

You do not need the matchmaker. You will make your own match.

Men come to the *gē jì* house. Many return for you. Sing for them. Smile. Avoid the foreigners because some do not understand and tug at you and push money in your hand. Let it fall to the mats. One more reason you are angry with the English.

One of the foreigners tells you a story about an English girl with glass slippers. Sometimes you think of those slippers when looking at the snow. The foreigner is encouraged that you listen, thinks you like the story. He says to give him your slipper, he will show you how the English girl won the emperor's first son.

You skin turns whiter than rice. Never speak to the English again.

But you cannot forget the glass-slipper girl. Perhaps because you could never wear such a slipper.

Or because, like the English girl, your slipper caught you an emperor. Soon enough your home is under yellow tiles.

Remember when you begged *Bà* to bind your feet, knowing the power it would bring you? Now it puzzles you. You expected to wield your husband as you did your father. You did not expect to be the only wife. Your sisters were of different mothers. You know, everyone knows a teapot is accompanied by four cups, but you have never seen a cup with four teapots. But you lived your name. You thought to be first in your house, and though you are not, your power exceeds anything you imagined when the binder came.

You are the least of the Emperor's cups.

'You are the lowest in your house, concubine.'

Yet, of all, you are commanded only by emperor and empress.

What did you want, that you have not got?

Tim Mayo

Monkey do

Tomorrow, if the world is saved,
we will gather around a tin can
we cannot open. Its shiny top
will wink in the morning light

as if it holds a secret it would like
to share—if only we could find
the key. We will need a twistable kind
with a mouse-eared bow big enough

for a thumb and un-accusing finger,
a key whose handle should be shaped
like a flattened figure eight. We will
need the sort of key a hand would use

to start that fuzzy wind-up toy,
which always clapped its cymbals
and marched in circles to a tune
we thought we'd heard before.

Eugen Bacon

And the stars saw

POM! PI! PO POM PI!

Drums vibrated in a booming cantata as the Abafazi celebrated their new bride. Bare torsos gyrated, gleamed with animal fat.

Our son has found a maiden!

Pure from the water nymph,

Such wonder she shines.

A swish of skirts here, a sway of neck there. And the feet! Caked with dust, toes tapped their dance in sync to the drums. A spray of soil from the ground formed a cloud that lifted to the horizon under the intense gaze of a yellow moon.

Fresh like the smell of rain!

Pure like a newborn,

Younger than morning dew.

Shani's arms glimmered with cowry shell trinkets, red, green, and yellow. Her legs were folded, curled into something tragic. She watched as dancers pranced to fever pitch, swayed heads hugged tight with feathers.

Tap! tap! jig! roll-a-hip! jig!

One fair young woman, the one with the biggest sway, with the neck of an ostrich and the eyes of a gazelle, spat each time Shani caught her eye.

Babies wrapped in leaves first perked up to *pom! pi! pom!* then surrendered to happy sleep. Mosquitos, mellowed with drunken blood, swooned to the ground and trembled their feet, as fireflies flickered orange wings and played with a faint-hearted wind.

Where are you? wondered Shani.

Again Fair Gazelle spat.

Only moments ago, it seemed, the Abafazi had raced with her into the night. She was gagged with leaves and kicking, slung over one man's shoulders. Jeru. Even then, she could have sworn she saw Bobbo, promise slinking from brush to brush.

Cara mama—the son never had: Papa always said this of Bobbo.

Brave, dear Bobbo. Where are you?

Jeru sat to her right on the gazebo near a crackling fire. He preened himself like a cock, picked at dried mucus along the plateau of his nostrils, near a wart.

'Finally,' he said, and reached to stroke her chin with those grimed hands.

Shani hissed.

'Spirit,' he said. 'That I love about you.' Spittle fell from his mouth. He missed several front teeth. 'But I'll tame you. You'll see.'

Shani spat near his feet.

His glee was more rasp than laugh. He rocked, almost fell into the flames. He was big like a toad, shaped like a toad, and overall—with bulge of eyes and pockmarked skin—resembled a toad.

Inwardly she shuddered at the lust in his eyes. Outwardly she glowered.

'Only a coward steals a woman. Do I look like a goat to you?'

'Had I asked, would your father have given me your hand?'

'Never to Abafazi filth.'

'There.'

‘And Father already has chosen another. *More worthy.*’ Daggers in her eyes.

‘Tonight I will take you, give you my babies. Even him, your worthy one, he cannot undo this. And then, I wonder—will you call our children Abafazi filth?’

Jeru was right. The land of Modo would never take Shani back. None of her people would touch a fallen woman. The drums became soulful, distant. Jeru was now steamy drunk, filled with pride and liquor made from black bee honey. He poked out toad hands, warmed them above burning cinders.

‘Cheer up, beautiful one,’ he said. ‘Long night ahead.’

The soft curtain of Shani’s dark braids concealed her eyes as she stared unblinking at pulsing wood. Her Modo people, all of them except Bobbo, slept like dead people. Nobody would come looking for Shani tonight. And tomorrow, by tomorrow ... nobody ever would.

Jeru’s gaze ran along the toga that cut across her shoulder. He flicked a tongue over his lip. His loin cloth lifted with his desire. He could take her now, drag her into the bush, break her unwillingness. But the night was young, and it was rife with music. He cleared his throat, spat phlegm into crackling flames.

With impulse he tore himself from the ground. His legs, unwilling to leave newfound bounty but altogether entranced by the music, walked in different directions. His loin cloth loosened from his waist. It slipped to the ground, overwhelmed by a distended belly stuffed with gizzard and yam. He danced, oblivious to his nakedness, swayed to the rest of his clan.

Fair Gazelle gyrated her hips towards him.

Shani stretched her legs, away from the fire. She listened as needles in the nerves of her toes died away. Slowly, she rose to her feet. She watched Jeru’s shudder dance. He half-limped, half-squatted, tapped the ground with his heel.

Shani’s beaded ornaments tinkled with motion. Fair Gazelle looked over her shoulder, continued dancing. More eyes of dancers followed Shani. They lost interest when she lowered herself into the bush. Beyond the village, the forest filled with wild animals. Evil spirits circled overhead. She couldn’t escape. No stolen bride ever had.

A tiny pool formed at her feet as her droplets fell. Three visits to the outdoor latrine each night, no wonder the Abafazi learned her pattern, snatched her that quick before she could raise an alarm.

Aroused by wetness, a green snake slithered close to her big toe.

‘Spirit of my fathers, bearer of good charm,’ she whispered to him.

He slithered into tussocks of grass.

The bush rustled, rueful branches bowing to the wind.

Crouching still, Shani parted the leaves and peered at the night.

‘Quiet,’ said a voice behind the shrub.

A woman emerged from a camouflage of leaves. It was Bobbo.

Shani felt weak at the knees, swooned, and fell into a warm and gentle arm.

‘Have they harmed you, radiant one?’ said Bobbo.

‘I’m fine,’ whispered Shani inside her sob.

Bobbo limped closer, her shuffle arising from childhood sickness that had shortened an arm and a leg. But though her right foot dragged like a broken twig, Shani knew, Bobbo’s right hand had power to knock over a grown bull. Without big effort she beat men in wrestling. As for her left foot, it pulled her twig foot with the speed of a warrior. And while everyone stayed astonished, no one recovered enough to bring up the subject of marriage.

Pom! Pi! Pom!

The Abafazi!

‘You shouldn’t be here. Bobbo! They’ll kill you! This doesn’t look safe. They’ll kill us!’

‘Always the whiny one. You could have crawled away by yourself, yanked off these stupid things.’ Bobbo drew a knife from a sheath around the waist, snipped and Shani’s beads fell. ‘Big sister isn’t always there to protect you. But I *will* get you a chamber pot! Beauty is not everything.’

‘Never said it was ...’

They stole away, away from the drums, from the Abafazi scouts. Her kidnappers would never get over the embarrassment of being outwitted by a woman. One-legged.

‘Dear Bobbo,’ whispered Shani.

‘Papa doesn’t call me *Cara mawa* for nothing.’

They exchanged a short glance. Now it was safe.

They leapt to their feet, surged into the wind homeward bound.

Dusk swallowed their liveness. Owl eyes lit their path. They raced through the wilderness, looping trees and shrubbery, chasing into darkness.

They jumped down a small valley, into open plains where the forest peeled back. Then it sprang up again as they made more ground into more thickets. Shani ran ahead into a whistling wind.

In a neon hue of orange, the moon smiled upon them, young and soft.

Behind them, rolling his waist and still smiling, muddy eyed and waving into the arms of a self-satisfied gazelle, Jeru gyrated and pranced to a cantata.

Les Wicks

Formal dining

I have believed poetry to be superior cutlery, the
bitter knife, the swoon.

It sits unsold in the google store because
sharp things
forget their place, should not be mailed, their
disgrace. I have maimed with a
bloodstained, scoured writer's block
but the damage was all to myself.

I'm always inviting them
& the guests sometimes don't show.

Patricia Tompkins

Thinking of you

the sapphire in my mother's engagement ring, decorating hands that did so much for me; gem-bright spotted boxfish; the deep, clear water of Crater Lake; a whale's tail in the St. Lawrence River; jeans, reliable as old friends; indigo Japanese quilts stitched with white; the Madonna's robe in Renaissance art; cobalt cornflowers at the coast-side farmers' market; mussel shells emptied by gulls; the ocean reflecting azure above; sweet berries in Sunday morning pancakes; eyes of a Siamese cat; simple rhythms of songs telling stories everyone knows; squawks of a jay; two full moons in one month; the sound of lapis lazuli; Wedgewood's colored clay; the Jewel Box star cluster viewed atop Mauna Kea, mid-Pacific.

a restless owl
and singing nightingale
hours of black and white

Annabel Wilson

Existing conditions*

Do you wish to apply for cover for any Existing Medical Conditions which will only be covered if assessed and approved by us? **YES**

Condition name	Date diagnosed	Daily Medication
Lung cancer	15/11/2014	Tarceva 100mg
Depression	01/11/1970	Fluoxetine 80mg
Anxiety	01/11/1970	Quetiapine 100mg
Thin blood	10/11/2012	Warfarin 6mg
Prostate cancer post treatment	27/06/2001	Doxazosin 4mg
Indigestion	01/11/1970	Famotadine 80mg

Treatment

Have you been treated in hospital in the last 12 months? **NO**

Have you visited a doctor in the last 90 days? **YES**

Have you been diagnosed with a terminal condition or metastatic condition? **YES**

Thank you for your application.

We cannot insure you for overseas travel at this time.

* The poem is derived from the found source of an online travel insurance application.

Andy Jackson

Anagramata

Or, Transformation is merely a rearrangement of the elements

Tired of my
deity form,
my rift ode,

at Mount I,
I taunt *Om*,
man it out.

Interim map—
mar me, pin it,
ram me in pit.

Ancient defect log.
Accident, left, gone.
Neglected faction.

Abort, mainly,
amiably. Torn,
my banal riot.

Recognised—tired
genocide. Stirred,
riotings decreed.

Discrete eroding.
I, redirected song,
decide rigor nest.

Hindered story—mine.
Irony's mirth needed.
Shiny, re-edited norm.

To form animal—
a normal motif.
Form into lama.

The word pain

without tenderness, we are in hell – Adrienne Rich

Ironic—one stranger after another approaches
this distorted torso, to confess their intense
back pain, expecting me to nod in wincing recognition.
I actually don't get pain. Pause.
No, really I don't. Confused expression. Awkwardness.

This absence was my mantra for years, repeated
until the ground began to shift beneath it.
The body can't be fixed.
And sometimes now it feels like the rough head of the femur
scrapes against the hip socket – bone against bone,

like the meanings we make against the world as it is.
Pain. You could take a blunt, thick skewer and thrust it
all the way through your torso,
bowing it back and forth. Or think of your most intimate
clothing stitched with nettle. Now consider

the pitch-black chasm between a metaphor and the actual
thing itself – and fall into it. This disappearance
is pain. The only word that fits.
A small word on the face of it, deceptive.
The mouth hardly moves to say it.

Twenty years ago, I paid a man I didn't know
to stab me with a needle
the width of a fishing line. He pushed three words
into the dermis with black ink – *weakness*
is strength. I didn't quite pass out.

You look at me and words appear inside your head.
Strange. Brave. Deformed. Beautiful. Pain.
I think of how I still flinch at the gaze from mirrors
or attention, and shrink back
from a hint of conflict. I don't want

these words anymore. I unhook them from my body,
watch them fall to the floor of the poem.
What is this thing, crouching and seething inside the word 'pain'?
Even when I tell you, you won't know.
Only skin can touch.

Alexandra Heep

The garden

My mother was a refugee; growing things was survival to her. Under her precocity, the coarsest soil thrived. While she did not give me toys or books, she allowed me my own gardening area, where I grew carrots, peas, strawberries and onions along plots of cheerful flowers.

While I followed her lead and labelled all my plots, I always knew what each vegetable looked like and instinctively recognized what weeds to pull and how to thin the rows, so the strongest greens could thrive and nourish my body in the end. My favourites were the sunflowers. They weren't grown for food, but to me they were just as important. Tall and proud against the fence facing the street, their bright faces, which seemed in tune with sun's cycles, cultivated my spirit. I still marvel how by summer's end, under my loving care, the sunflowers had outgrown me.

Decades later, my mother toils in a garden of a different sort, one that is now only accessible to me in the depth of the darkest, stillest night. I can't find the way that often, but when I do, entering the creaky gate that leads to the familiar stucco structure set against green, rolling hills is just like coming home from school so long ago. Except, the old rooster that used to attack me is no longer there—neither are the chickens he once gallantly defended.

During each visit, I seem to be catching up to her in age. Or is it the other way around? I wonder what will happen when we arrive at the same phase in time? While I notice slight changes inside the house each time I come, one thing remains the same: her everlasting silence. No matter, we have our comfortable routine. We take our tools from the adjacent, rickety barn and make our way to the garden. Here, together, we till the fragrant earth. One set of smooth and one pair of rough hands, working in unison: Backs bent against the setting sun, our faces shielded by the growing sunflowers of my youth.

Author biographies

Eugen Bacon

Eugen Bacon studied at Maritime Campus—Greenwich University, UK, less than two minutes' walk from The Royal Observatory of the Greenwich Meridian. Her arty muse fostered itself within the baroque setting of the Old Royal Naval College, and Eugen found herself a computer graduate mentally re-engineered into creative writing. She is now a PhD candidate in writing 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*.

Ken Cockburn

Ken Cockburn is a poet and translator living in Edinburgh, Scotland. Recent publications include *Snapdragon*, translations from the German of poems by Arne Rautenberg; *Veined with Shadow Branches*, featuring a collaboration with painter Andrew MacKenzie; and *The Road North: a journey around Scotland guided by Basho's oku-no-hosomichi*, written together with Alec Finlay. www.kencockburn.co.uk

Sue Gillett

Sue Gillett is a senior lecturer and poet who teaches creative writing at the Bendigo campus of La Trobe University. She is the author of *Cassandra in Red* and *Views from Beyond the Mirror: the Films of Jane Campion*, and was the editor of *Landlines: An Anthology of Regional Poets*. Sue has also published numerous articles on literature and cinema in Australian and international journals and held the honorary position of editor-in-chief for Melbourne Poets Union from 2008–2013. Her most recent publication is the memoir, 'The Mother and her Ghosts,' in C. Nieman et al., *Mothers and Others* (Pan Macmillan).

Linda Godfrey

Linda Godfrey writes in Wollongong. She works as an editor, and is the series editor for Spineless Wonders' microliterature series. She curates the live readings, *Little Fictions*, and the poetry readings, *Rocket Readings*. She is the artistic program manager for the 2015 and 2106 Wollongong Writers Festival.

John Grey

John Grey is an Australian poet, resident in the US, and recently published in *New Plains Review*, *Perceptions* and *Sanskrit* with work upcoming in *South Carolina Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Owen Wister Review* and *Louisiana Literature*.

Liam Guilar

Liam Guilar lives on the Queensland Gold Coast where he teaches English. His most recent book of poems, *Rough Spun To Close Weave*, is published by Ginninderra Press (ginninderrapress.com.au/poetry.html). His next book, *Anbaga*, will be published in America, sometime in 2015. He runs a blog about poetry and related subjects at ladygodivaandme.blogspot.com.au.

Phillip Hall

Phillip Hall is an essayist and poet; he is also an editor with *Verity La's* 'Emerging Indigenous Writers' Project'. In 2014 he published *Sweetened in Coals*. He is currently working on a collection of place-based poetry called *Fume*. This project celebrates, and responds to, Indigenous culture in the Northern Territory's Gulf of Carpentaria.

Shé Hawke

Shé Hawke is a widely published ficto-critical poet and transdisciplinary scholar invested in the mingling of fields and genres. She currently teaches in sociology at The Australian National University. Her novel in verse, *Depot girl*, was shortlisted for the Colin Roderick Literary Award in 2009. *Aquamorphia: falling for water* (Interactive Publications) appeared in 2014 and is unlikely to win the PM's Literary Award under the current government...

Dominique Hecq

Dominique Hecq grew up in the French-speaking part of Belgium. She read Germanic philology at the University of Liège and then moved to Australia where she completed a PhD on exile in Australian literature. She also holds an MA in literary translation. Dominique is the author of a novel, three collections of short fiction, five books of poetry and two plays. Her awards include The New England Review Prize for Poetry (2005), The Martha Richardson Medal for Poetry (2006) and the inaugural AALITRA Prize for Literary Translation (2014). *Stretchmarks of Sun* is her latest book of poetry (Re.Press 2014). *Smacked and Other Stories of Addiction* is forthcoming.

Alexandra Heep

German-born **Alexandra Heep** is a web content writer who occasionally writes prose as a creative way to make sense of the world around her. Alexandra currently lives in Chicago, Illinois, where she finds inspiration in her tiny, but thriving garden despite the short growing season in the temperamental American Midwest. She aspires to overcome physical challenges and tries to expand her English vocabulary daily.

Andy Jackson

Andy Jackson's poetry collection *Among the Regulars* was shortlisted for the 2011 Kenneth Slessor Prize. He won the 2013 Whitmore Press Manuscript Prize with *the thin bridge*, and his latest collection is *Immune Systems* (poems and ghazals on India and medical tourism). Andy has performed at literary events and arts festivals in Australia, India, USA and Ireland. He writes about the poetry of bodily difference at amongtheregulars.wordpress.com.

Christina Lloyd

Born in Hong Kong, raised in the Philippines and educated in the States, **Christina Lloyd** holds a masters degree in creative writing from Lancaster University and a masters in Hispanic languages and literatures from U.C. Berkeley. In addition to a couple of pamphlets, her work appears in various journals, including *The North* and *Aesthetica's Creative Writing Annual*. She is due to start a PhD in creative writing through Lancaster University in October.

Jay Kylie Ludowyke

Jay Kylie Ludowyke is a writer, editor and teacher who inhabits a small desk with a great view at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Although she keeps failing to learn the violin, she does hold a first class Honours degree in creative writing with a history major, and is a doctoral candidate researching nonfiction novels about historical artefacts. She love-hates both Hemingway and presenting conference papers and in 2014 her novella *White Noise* was shortlisted in the Great Novella Search. Jay.Ludowyke@research.usc.edu.au

Tim Mayo

Tim Mayo holds an ALB *cum laude* from Harvard University and an MFA from Bennington College. His poems and reviews have appeared in many US literary journals and *The Writer's Almanac*. His full length collection, *The Kingdom of Possibilities*, was published by Mayapple Press in 2009, and is available on Amazon.com. A second collection, *Self-Storage*, is still searching for a publisher. He lives in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA, where he works in a detox unit in a mental institution.

Margaret Moores

Margaret Moores was a bookseller for many years but now works as a publisher's sales representative. She is a distance student in the Master of Creative Writing programme at Massey University. Her poems have been published in *Shot Glass Journal*, *blackmail press* and in *Poetry New Zealand Year Book 1*.

Sarah Penwarden

Sarah Penwarden lives in Auckland, where she works as a counselor educator. She is currently involved in part-time doctoral studies at the University of Waikato on a topic that brings together grief and poetry. She has had poems published in *Poetry New Zealand*, poems and short stories published in *Takabe*, and a short story broadcast on Radio New Zealand. She also writes short stories and poetry for children and had had both forms published in *The School Journal*.

Anastasia Stelse

Anastasia Stelse is a native of southeastern Wisconsin, USA; assistant editor for *The Intentional*; and a graduate from the MFA program at American University. She holds a BA in archaeology, a field that continues to fascinate her and influence her poetry. She is currently pursuing a PhD in creative writing at the University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Writers. Her work has appeared in American and Canadian journals including *The Bleeding Lion*, *Product*, and *(parenthetical)*.

Pat Tompkins

Pat Tompkins is an editor in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her poems have appeared in a wide variety of journals, most recently including *Confingo*, *The A3 Review*, and *KYSO Flash*.

Les Wicks

Les Wicks has toured widely and seen publication across 20 countries in 11 languages. His 11th book of poetry is *Sea of Heartbeak (Unexpected Resilience)* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2013), his 12th (a Spanish selection) *El Asombrado* (Rochford St, 2015). <http://leswicks.tripod.com/lw.htm>

Annabel Wilson

Annabel Wilson is a writer and high school teacher from Wanaka in New Zealand's South Island. Her poetry has been published in the *Otago Daily Times*, *Blackmail Press*, *Kiwi Diary* and *Wanaka Sun*. She has a Masters in creative writing through Massey University and is currently working on a theatre piece and screenplay which explores the metaphoric potential of the Southern Alps and their meaning for those who live near them.

E Wen Wong

My name is **E Wen Wong** and I am a twelve-year-old student of Cobham Intermediate in Christchurch. Poetry, for me, is a way to share and convey my thoughts with others, or, as said by F. Scott Fitzgerald, 'You don't write because you want to say something, you write because you have something to say.' Writing aside, I have a passion for running, mathematics and meteorology.

