Ex Booranga Fellowship Writer, Les Wicks grew up in western Sydney. He’s been a traveller, rail-worker and union advocate.

He’s performed at festivals, schools, and prisons, has published in over 150 magazines, anthologies and newspapers across 9 countries in 5 languages. Les runs workshops around Australia and is editor of Meuse Press which focuses on poetry outreach projects like *poetry on buses* and *poetry published on the surface of a river*.

Les Wicks’ 7th book, *Stories of the Feet* is now available from Five Islands Press, Australia’s leading publisher of poetry. Here is a book celebrating Australian landscape, always with a view to the rich diversity of people encountered. While relentlessly on the move - from Bondi to Broken Hill, Northern NSW to Wagga Wagga and Wayatannah - this book refuses to look away.

*In Australia, dramatic narratives, in a variety of styles, still have a vitality that at least matches, perhaps outshines what other English poetries can show… [*Two Ghosts…*” featured herein] with its oral manner, builds up an eerie tension…*

Christopher Pollnitz, Ulitarra

Les is your tour guide to the real Australia, a land of Emus and Kangaroos indeed, also a land of dead bodies covered in sheets, or cold nights thumbing rides along deserted highways… Another fabulous book, from a great poet. Paul Gilbert, Above Ground Testing (Can).

Whilst in residence at Booranga Les Wicks will conduct a poetry writing workshop as part of Booranga’s Saturday Creative Writing Program (held on the first Saturday of each month). The workshop will be from 12 noon – 4pm on Saturday 5 June and the cost will be $20/$25/$10. For further information or bookings, contact the Centre on: 02 6933 2688.

**Booranga Writers’ Centre calls for submissions to fourWfifteen: a collection of poetry and prose**

*FourWfifteen* is calling for contributions of previously unpublished prose, poetry and artwork/graphics. Manuscripts (word processed in Times New Roman, 12 point, double-spaced on A4 paper with author’s name on the back of the page and a SSAE if manuscripts are to be returned) and original artwork are accepted for consideration until the 30 June, 2004. Submissions on IBM Microsoft Word disks or via email are preferred. Writers are asked to limit their submissions to three stories or six poems. Send submissions to: *fourWfifteen*, Booranga Writers’ Centre, Locked Bag 588, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW, 2678 or email: booranga@csu.edu.au. For further information contact centre director, Melissa Delaney on: 02 6933 2688.
Reviews by David Gilbey


These are all terrific new books — in such different ways. And all of them are by Adelaide writers.

Taking Shape is Steve Evans’ sixth collection (plus he’s edited an anthology of Friendly Street poems and co-written a book on creative writing). Evans is a playful, sensual writer whose poems are concretely focussed but which spin off into realms of the senses and intellectual delight. For example some of the Bones suite of poems won the 1995 Queensland Premier’s Prize for Poetry — and you can see why when you come across gems like: ‘knees are versatile/ birds have theirs on backwards/ maybe they know better/ because mine when young/ sprang me off rooftops/ a small capped creature/ spread-eagled above the roses/ who did not fly’ or: ‘I’ve watched your fingers spread/ a fan of spokes/ then gasped at all their little articulations/ those odd angles clapsed/ in marvellous/ attendance/ around my cock.’

Evans’ poetry discovers both the patterns and particularity in the universe. Even in Dachau which won the 2003 New England Poetry Prize and shows his concern with ethics and human experience on an historical scale, Evans achieves impact through a specific and delicate use of imagery and vicarious imagining. He’s a Romantic poet in that he is keen to share his embrace of a moment of feeling or understanding with the reader so he uses particular images to explore more general cultural significance. Thus, in Splinter the silver becomes ‘a clear floating comma/ that punctuates my skin’ and in the two stanzas of the confronting Damage — which you really need to read or hear to get the powerful impact — he takes the reader through a series of injuries and subsequent hospital procedures to imagine something of the victim’s experiences, eg. ‘the plaster tunnels she wore/ pipes for her pale flesh’, and to interrogate la condition humaine in a heedless universe.

Winter Grace is Jeff Guess’s eighth collection of poems. He’s edited a string of anthologies and written a couple of poetry writing texts for secondary contexts. And some of Guess’s poems over the years have been published in fourW. Living up to the suggestion of the title, there are elegant, formal, spare and balanced poems, often using traditional forms of sonnet and quatrain. Many of them focus on English and Australian literary or historical or artistic figures, echoing, apostrophising, or interrogating their work or lives. So there are poems to or about, for example, Agatha Christie, John Clare, Eleanor Dark, Henry Parkes and Russell Drysdale.

Guess’s poems are reflective and subtle, often drawing the reader into an imaginative journey to make connections between a documented past or place or work and some moment of present epiphany. Thus, the seven couplets in Morning Conclave situate a girl ‘in a pale leaf of August sunshine’, on the Post Office steps in a mandala of ‘concentric circles of text and time’; Charles Harpur in Shooting Accident is epitomised as ‘Born with a reed in the mind’s larynx’; in River Murray Miscellany we read ‘ants strip the rotting flesh/ from rejected carp./ Native ducks stencil sunshine’, on the Post Office steps in a mandala of ‘concentric circles of text and time’; Charles Harpur in Shooting Accident is epitomised as ‘Born with a reed in the mind’s larynx’; in River Murray Miscellany we read ‘ants strip the rotting flesh/ from rejected carp./ Native ducks stencil sunshine’. In a more playful tone, Guess writes in Tomato: ‘seducer of lips/ and tongue/ speaks Italian/ sings tenor/ and makes love/ with the light on.’

The Mother Workshops is the title of both the collection and the major sequence in Jeri Kroll’s fifth book of poetry (she has also written children’s books for various ages and edited anthologies). In The Mother Workshop sequence of 25 ‘Exercises’, Kroll uses some of the foci and processes of writing workshops as the titles for individual pieces — some are poems and some prose — relating to her mother’s life. So she both writes about her mother and discovers her mother as she writes. Thus the first ‘Exercise’, titled Similes has ‘The mother’s hip explodes like peanut brittle/ The mother loses nouns and verbs, flaps like a bird counting chicks in her nest,/ The mother is a still pool,/ waiting for me to ripple with my words.’

This is sophisticated and at times heart-rending writing, as the mother, once a celebrated dancer, is reduced to a hospital bed from which she will never recover. The collection’s final sequence of twenty poems includes two poems which you really need to see (which would be a considerable loss): ‘Exercise 8: Writing to Music’ and ‘Exercise 10: A Postmodern Workshop’ which Kroll uses a poem of her mother’s. Towards the end, there is Exercise 19: Meditations on Food which is subtitled The Philosophy of Chocolate which concludes with the very touching and memorable poetic prose: ‘But finally… I discovered the transcendence of chocolate. I could bring it as a gift and know it would be greeted with a moist mouth… Here is the philosophy of chocolate: in all its forms, chocolate marks the stages of a life. First, it is a reward or bribe given by parents. Then it’s an instant high for a volatile teen. Next a token of lust from a lover. After childbirth and unwanted pounds, it becomes a sin, a forbidden treat secreted in a drawer underneath too-tight lingerie. Even dieters enjoy low-fat shadows, as sweet self-control melts on the tongue….Finally chocolate is all we have. Our lives slim down to basics, the first principles of pleasure: tactile and oral.’

Five Islands Press is to be congratulated on the publication of these three collections: they add richness and variety to the contemporary writing menu offerings. Get hold of one or all for some fresh textual pleasures.
I was pleased to see that Anthony had managed to imagine scenes and characters from the historical texts that he had read, and that a narrative that was uniquely his was being developed. We had a lot of interesting conversations about his characters, for whom he obviously feels a great affection, and affinity. Sometimes, when he talks of them, you can feel that these people are living in his mind. That’s always a very good sign.

Giving advice to another writer is difficult, because people have different ways of doing things, and I don’t feel that I should impose my own onto another. I therefore perceived the aim to be to set up a productive, two-way dialogue – and I think we managed to achieve that. Anthony listened carefully to my ideas, and when he didn’t agree with them, I was happy. I listened to him. It usually led to an interesting and fruitful discussion.

The main piece of advice that I gave Anthony was to focus: on whose story he was telling, and on creating a story that would engage the reader. This involves, often, cutting the facts from the fiction. It involves releasing things that you love, because they don’t work in the context of a novel. It means knowing what the characters you have created want, and sometimes making it hard for them to get those things.

Often, as I gave advice, I was also giving it to myself. I know that my book about the gold discovery is currently too big and unwieldy. At times I think that it might make a better doorstop or weapon than published work. It is also overly ‘factual’ at points. Through working with Anthony, I was able to think about my own book differently, and when I attempt to whack it into shape during the next draft, I have a partially fresh perspective, and therefore new enthusiasm.

I hope that we inspired each other, there in Wagga Wagga, on the other side of the world from where I am now writing this. Also, considering his abilities in the kitchen, Anthony should think about writing a cook book – I mean as well as his novel. Publishers love a good cook book – almost as much as I enjoy his chocolate cake.

Interview with Bradley Trevor Grieve, author of ‘The Blue Day Book’
by Booranga Youth Representative, Matt Dunn
(this is an edited transcript of the interview from 23/3/04 at ANU Co-op Book Shop, copywrite belongs to Matt Dunn, 2004)

You were in the army before you tried your hand at writing. How did you make the change from paratrooper to struggling writer?

Well, first let me point out that the intention of the change was not to be a struggling writer, but a successful one. And secondly, it wasn’t an immediate transformation. I don’t think I had the knowledge or the courage to make the leap from a very clearly defined career path of the military through to the free form chaos that is the existence of a writer…I’ve always enjoyed writing, I’ve always enjoyed art and been reasonably good at it. Particularly through high school, that’s when you first have your own voice and it was recognised at that point by others and myself but it’s a big transition to decide I’m going to make my life revolve around creative work.

So how did you finally get published for the first time?

When I recall being published I think of my cartoon as my first break and it takes the same principles, you have to stick at it and be relentless. I fooled myself into thinking that because I was cartooning at the Sydney Morning Herald, which is probably the biggest broadsheet paper in Australia, that I was obviously popular and I was well known in that context that I would have no trouble getting the deal, but that was not the case. Initially, it’s all about being relentless but it took me two years and thirty six submissions before I was finally accepted.

Are people often surprised by your age? Do people think that you should be older than you really are?

I do get that a lot. I think when people see the lines in my face they realise I’ve lived a life. People often think that I’m some kind of guru or something and I consistently reject this. I’m a humourist, a poetic humourist perhaps, a fractured philosopher perhaps. I argue that I don’t pretend to come from a position of great wisdom either, but you don’t have to be old to have a form of wisdom. I put these feelings into the Blue Day Book and I turned it into a humble and humorous little book about perspective. So I could stand back from it and have a laugh at myself, and have a smile, a bit of a chuckle and every author, if they’re honest, writes for themselves.

What books did you like to read when you were younger and who do you think influenced your writing?

I love visual books, I love Dr Suess Books, I think he writes just brilliantly, the first adult book that I really enjoyed was My Family and Other Animals by Gerald Durrell. I don’t read a lot of fiction, I read a lot of non-fiction, I love biographies, I like history, I love poetry, I’m chairman of the National Poetry Prize and I genuinely love poetry.

You are currently giving a series of talks on how to get published, so what advice would you give to young or aspiring writers out there?

I remind you that there are three golden rules for professional creativity. One is never stop creating or crafting new works. Two, is always make the effort to have that work seen by appropriate professionals. Get positive criticism, and avoid your friends. They love you to death but they are not editors, they can’t give you a fair critique because they are too close to you. So use your local writers’ centre and the Australian Society of Authors is the group that every writer should join. The last rule is to invest in your dreams first. Be relentless, build creative relationships with other writers, publishers and invest in those relationships. Lastly, publishing itself, for young authors, is broken up into three phases – conception/execution/and delivery.

What are you currently working on?

I’m just launching a book called The Book for People Who Do Too Much, and, based on the success of my book, Priceless – The Vanishing Beauty of a Fragile Planet, the United Nations have asked me to do a book on the sixteen key environmental treaties. So I’ve been back and forth to New York talking with them and they have been back and forth to Australia. We had an emu fall in love with the head of all treaties from the United Nations at the zoo. I was like, “Oh my God, how embarrassing!”… but he loved it and it was fine. It’s a lot of research involved in this project so it will probably take about two years.
Calling Emerging Regional Poets
Booranga Writers’ Centre Fellowship/Mentorship Program
Be Mentored by Poet, Samuel Wagan Watson

Booranga is pleased to announce that indigenous poet Samuel Wagan Watson will be our next Fellowship Writer. Sam will be in residence from 24 July – 14 August and in addition to conducting a writing workshop (Saturday 7 August) and a public reading at the Riverine Club with Five Island Press New Poets tour (Tuesday 10 August) will mentor a regionally based emerging poet.

Born in 1972, Samuel Wagan Watson is a member of Brisbane’s Watson family clan, proud descendants of the Mununjali and the Birri Gubba. His first collection of poetry *of muse, meandering and midnight* was the winning entry in the 1999 David Unaipon Award for emerging indigenous writers. It also received a Highly Commended in both the Anne Elder Award and the 2000 Award for Outstanding Contributions to Australian Culture.

Sam’s second book of poetry, *itinerant blues* is set against his trademark industrial backdrop, and conveys a restless troubadour’s slow-burning and misspent passion.

Expressions of interest are now being received from emerging poets that would like the opportunity to work closely with Sam over the residency. Please send a covering letter outlining your interest, experience and availability and enclose three examples of poems.

For further information contact Melissa Delaney at the centre on: (t) 02 6933 2688 or (e) booranga@csu.edu.au.

Poetica
Presented by Mike Ladd
Every Saturday at 3:05pm on ABC Radio National

**June**

5th Federico Garcia Lorca: A Bold Life, An Untimely Death, Part 1 – PoeticA has collaborated with a range of musicians, singers and theatre makers in Hobart and Sydney, including *IHOS Opera*, to explore the poetic works of the seminal twentieth century Spanish poet and dramatic writer, Federico Garcia Lorca.


19th Gwen Harwood – Selected poems of one of Australia’s best loved poets.


**July**

3rd On the Hay Plain – The poetry and wide open soundscapes of the Hay plain.

10th NAIDOC: Fresh Cuttings – New writing by contemporary Indigenous poets.

17th The World’s Wife – The poetry of Carol Ann Duffy.

24th Birds – Judith Wright’s delightful poems celebrating the avian species.

COMPETITIONS & AWARDS

Albury City LibraryShort Story Competition

Entries should be original stories up to a maximum of 3000 words in length and be inspired by the theme Phoenix Rising. Previously published works will not be accepted. Details and entry forms can be requested by email to (e) sgrouch@alburycity.nsw.gov.au or by (f) 02 6041 4355 or by (t) 02 6051 3470 or download information from www.albury.nsw.gov.au

Closing date: 25 June, 2004

Youth Writes

Prose (fiction or non-fiction) to 2000 words. Theme: the Australian Spirit. For entry forms sends a SSAE to: Youth Writes, PO Box 2738, Bakery Hill, Victoria, 3353.

Closing Date: 30 June, 2004

Dogwood Playwrights Initiative

One-act play focussing on rural issues in the 21st century. Between 50-70 minutes long, maximum of 6 cast members. Cannot have been previously performed. Dogwood retains first performance option for 12 months on 3 finalists. First prize of $5,000, two runner-up prizes of $500. Three finalists published as a collection. For further information contact the Competition Co-ordinator: Mrs Ann Gibbons (t) 07 4627 1131 or 07 46271707 or (e) tedgibbons@bigpond.com

Closing date: 25 June, 2004

May Gibbs Children’s Literature Trust Fellowship

Australian authors and illustrators of children’s books are invited to apply for a one month residential fellowship in Adelaide, Melbourne or Canberra in 2005. Full details can be found at: www.maygibbs.org.au/application.html

Closing date: 30 June, 2004

Arts Network East Gippsland Shock Short Story Writing Competition

Entry fee $5.50 with 1st prize of $100 and 2nd and 3rd prizes book vouchers. Theme: Shock (a sudden sensation which disrupts mental and physical equilibrium). 2000 words maximum. For further details: t: 03 5153 1988 or e: aneg@al.com.au

Closing date: 25 June, 2004

Young Playwright’s Awards

The Queensland Theatre Company is calling on young playwrights between 13-18 years of age to experience the challenge of writing for performance. QTC is calling for entries of one-act plays of 30 minutes duration in two different sections (13-15 years and 16-18 years). Aside from cash, books, professional memberships, scholarships to the Company’s Theatre Residency Week and a 2005 Season Ticket, the chance to work with professional actors and a director on their scripts is on offer. More information is available from: www.qldtheatreco.com.au or by (t) 07 3010 7600.

Closing date: 9 July, 2004

Ginninderra Press

Children’s’ Competition – Refuge

Ginninderra Press invites entries into its 2004 short story for children competition. Entries should be original and between 2,000 – 3,000 words in length. They must be suitable for children aged 8-12 years. Details and entry forms can be requested by mail from Stephen Matthews, Ginninderra Press, PO Box 53, Charnwood, ACT, 2615 or (f) 02 6258 9069 or (e) smgp@cyberone.com.au

Closing date: 30 June, 2004
**OPPORTUNITIES**

**Young Filmmakers Fund**

If you’re a NSW resident aged 18-35, and you’ve got a film project you believe in, the Young Filmmakers Fund could help you get it on the screen. YFF provides grants of up to $30,000 to produce films in any format or genre, anything from short dramas and documentaries to animation and experimental films. To apply you need to use the official application form and include a script, detailed budget, and a production schedule. You can download the guidelines and application forms from [www.fto.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fto.nsw.gov.au)

**Closing date: 21 June, 2004**

**My Space is an Amazing Space**

The production lab is now seeking stories about your amazing space for broadcast on SBS TV and online. Tell us about your amazing space – is it a high, low, big, small, far flung or wide open space? Is it a creative, contemplative or communal space: the place you go to be inspired, engaged, confronted or amazed? To submit your story idea visit: [http://www.sbs.com.au/myspace/](http://www.sbs.com.au/myspace/)

**Borderlands**

*Borderlands* pays between $25 and $50 per story and is published three times per year. For further information see: [www.borderlands.com.au](http://www.borderlands.com.au)

**Ideomancer**

*Ideomancer* is a sebzine paying US3cent per word to a maximum of $100 and is published monthly. [Www.ideomancer.com](http://www.ideomancer.com)

**Digital Artist Magazine**

Is currently accepting submissions on various topics of art. Writers interested in contributing to the magazine should email contributors@digital-artist.org for further details.

**Call for art stories – ABC Online**

ABC Arts Online is keen to increase its coverage of regional arts and is in a position to commission writers and digital content makers to write/create stories for its website [www.abc.net.au/arts/](http://www.abc.net.au/arts/). It is looking for strong stories about regional art or regional artists. For further information contact via email: blair.gordon@abc.net.au

**Dogwood Playwrights Initiative**

A playwriting competition with the goal of encouraging writers to focus on rural issues in the 21st century, giving a voice to those with a life that struggles with problems and rejoices in successes that are unique to rural and remote Australia. It is open to plays of any genre. Seeking creative ways of expressing rural remote life in a 'dramatic' form. First Prize: $5,000. For further information contact Ann Gibbons on t: 07 4627 1131 or e: tedgibbons@bigpond.com

**Closing date: 25 June**

**New Authors Welcome**

Sid Harta Publishers Australia wish to extend an opportunity to new and emerging authors committed to seeing their work in print. Contact Manuscript Editor, Temple House Pty Ltd, PO Box 1042, Hartwell, Victoria, 3124 or e: editor@publisher-guidelines.com or author@sidharta.com.au

**Cornerfold – Issue 9**

*Cornerfold* Issue 9, the “Street Art” issue, is online now at [www.sbs.com.au/cornerfold](http://www.sbs.com.au/cornerfold). *Cornerfold* is an SBS website featuring collaborations between Australian zinemakers and new media designers. This, the last issue of *Cornerfold*, takes it to the streets.

**Short Story Website**

There is a new website for writers who are interested in writing short stories. Visit [www.skivemagazine.mockfrog.com.au](http://www.skivemagazine.mockfrog.com.au) for more information.
WWW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2004
Single Annual Membership $33.00 or $22.00 concession (GST inclusive) entitles you to:

- Free copy of fourW fourteen
- Six newsletters & regular mail outs
- Use of Booranga Writers’ Centre resources including
- Access to a network of writers and book enthusiasts for information and friendship
- Access to newsletters from other writers’ centres and up-to-date information on competitions
- Invitations to writing events and gatherings
- 10% discount at Book City, Wagga Wagga
- 10% discount at Repeated Reading, Wagga Wagga
- 10% discount at Angus & Robertson, Wagga Wagga
- Member discounts at readings, performances and workshops

Please fill in and post application to: Wagga Wagga Writers Writers Inc., Booranga Riverina Writers’ Centre, Locked Bag 588, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW, 2678 Telephone/Fax: (02) 69332688

Name: ________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________________

Enclosed: $ ...................... Cheque/money order for single/concession/youth (Please circle).

Wagga Wagga Writers Writers Inc. was formed in 1987 to assist and promote local authors and their work. The group holds regular readings at local venues, conducts writing workshops, offers writing fellowships at Booranga, the Riverina Writers’ Centre at Charles Sturt University, publishes an annual anthology, fourW under the imprint of fourW Press, and is active in promoting and developing writing and writers throughout the Riverina.

Membership is by calendar year, costs $33.00 and $22.00 concession with a Youth Membership of $10. FourW, our annual anthology features the works of authors, artists and photographers, regional and beyond, collected in one diverse and original publication which is sent free to each WWWW member (excepting youth members). Members are always welcome at the centre, to browse the library, work on your writing, bring along any ideas for projects, collaborations, writerly activities, contributions for our newsletter or just come visit us.

If undeliverable please return to:
Booranga Riverina Writers’ Centre
Locked Bag 588
Charles Sturt University
Wagga Wagga 2678
Telephone/Fax: (02) 69 332688

SURFACE MAIL
POSTAGE PAID AUSTRALIA