

# write turn

a publication of the nt writers' centre

# wordstorm 2012 wrap up

If there is one thing you learn about running a writers' festival, it is how far words stretch into every corner of the arts. Words that become lyrics for songs, dialogue for actors, elements in a painting, and words that become carriers of the facts of the past – intentionally or unintentionally.

And so it was with *WordStorm* in 2012. Words in their magnificent variety hummed and buzzed around Civic Park and Brown's Mart. Words that ranged from the impressionistic and dream-like to the hard-edged cut and thrust of political and historical debate.

This *WordStorm* differed from others in its inclusion of the National Poetry Festival, a partnership with Australian Poetry that brought poets to Darwin from around Australia and beyond. And the poets were as diverse as the writing as *WordStorm*. While many of them read and wrote in much the way we expect poets to do, others performed, sang, and improvised, and one of the highlights of *WordStorm* was the SLAM.TV event which saw poetry paired with video, filmmaking and the internet. One personal highlight was the poetry breakfast at Viva La Body, where some beautiful poetry was read in an

intimate and convivial setting – just as it should be.

The crowds that came to *WordStorm* flocked to our special events. *Women of Letters*, the Mother's Day Brunch and the William McInnes lunch were all sell-outs, as were events such as Joelistics, the Comedy Debate, and *Midnight Muses*. In essence, these events bring literature out of the private world of reading and writing and open both up to public discussion and involvement. And, of course, it helps if you have some cracking entertainers such as Judith Lucy, William McInnes and Marieke Hardy to liven up the conversations.



Michael Giacometti reads poems to an attentive audience at Viva la Body.



Leah Flanagan captivating audiences at Brown's Mart.

## from the centre

Amidst the maelstrom of *WordStorm* the NT Literary Awards were held, and alongside them the NT Writers' Centre's own set of awards, *Territory Read*. For the first time both awards were combined in the one ceremony at Parliament House on the opening night of *WordStorm*. William McInnes gave the keynote speech, Barry Jonsberg presided as MC and Marion Scrymgour MLA presented the awards.

Both *Territory Read* and the NT Literary Awards play a vital role in encouraging and supporting literary activity and excellence in the NT. A big thanks to the NT Library for organising the award ceremony, and to Copyright Agency Limited and the Chief Minister for sponsoring the *Territory Read* Awards.

Our congratulations go to Professor Alan Powell, whose book *Northern Voyages* took out the NT Book of the Year as well as the Non-Fiction Book of the Year in *Territory Read*, and NT Writers' Centre member Lolla Stewart who won the Children's/Young Adult Fiction category with *Savannah Dreams*. Barry Jonsberg (*Being Here*) and Joanne van Os (*The Secret of the Lonely Isles*) received short-listing commendations.

NT Writers' Centre members featured prominently in the NT Literary Awards:

Dymocks Arafura Short Story Award: 'Pig', by Karen Manton

Dymocks Red Earth Poetry Award: 'Kwatye Scours the Sand', by Michael Giacometti

CDU University Bookshop Travel Short Story Award: 'The Slow Living', by Karen Manton

CDU Essay Award: 'Looking for Bertha Strehlow – giving voice to silence', by Leni Shilton

Darwin Festival Script Award: *The Lion Tamer*, by Sandra Thibodeaux

Birch Carroll and Coyle Screenwriting Award: *Hopetown*, by Mary Anne Butler.

## members news

Congratulations to the NTWC members acknowledged above for their wins at the NT Literary Awards. Here are some additional recent achievements to be celebrated.

Nick Bland's book *The Runaway Hug* has won the Children's Book Council Early Childhood Book of the Year.

Rohan Wightmann has two stories in the latest issue of *Wet Ink*. Copies of *Wet Ink* are available for loan from the centre.

Mary Anne Butler, Chris Raja and Sandra Thibodeaux all had work in the Darwin Festival program - for an indepth look see pages 8 & 9.

Kathleen Epelde has been awarded a 2012 Writers Fellowship at the Varuna Writers Centre, a two-week residency during which she'll work on finishing her memoir.

Ali Cobby-Eckerman, who has worked on a wide range of project with the centre over the years, has been nominated for a Deadly Award! You can vote for Ali online.

Sophie Constable's short story 'Yello Pearl' has been published by StringyBark press as the anthology's title story.

Kelly-Lee Hickey and Jo Dutton have both been awarded artists residencies at Kangaroo Island and Geraldton respectively thanks to Writing Australia.

## write turn newsletter of the ntwriters' centre

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## advertising

1/4 page = \$85

1/2 page = \$150

Inserts = \$50 per 100

Deadlines for advertising

Bookings: the middle of the month or by arrangement. Adverts in electronic form are preferred. Please provide as 150dpi tiff or jpg files.

## new members

Rena Toth

Annie Ellis

Kristy Prowse

Michael Watts

Rod Kennett

Emma Sleath

Will Ladson

Elizabeth Death

Allen Nash

## Disclaimer

The information provided in this publication is presented in good faith as a service to members of the NT Writers' Centre. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the NTWC. While the information is believed to be correct, the NT Writers' Centre takes no responsibility for its accuracy. No liability is accepted for any statement of opinion or any error or omission.

## wordstorm wrap up

More serious questions were addressed at the various panel sessions, amongst the best attended of which were 'Truth is Stranger than Fiction' (on the popularity of non-fiction writing), 'Political Words', 'Middle Class Backyards' and 'Empowering Aboriginal Literature'. The decision to make these free events seemed to pay off, with increased attendances and enthusiastic debate. The panels make *WordStorm* as much as festival of ideas as a literary festival, and I think there is scope to broaden this aspect of the festival in the future.

Behind the public façade of *WordStorm* were the industry events and workshops. The Thursday and Friday were taking up with Meet the Publisher and the Indigenous Editing Forum, while at the same time writers went out to schools to do workshops and readings, and to the NTOEC to connect with remote students. On Saturday and Sunday, the adult workshops by Leni Shilton, Verena Tay and Robin Hemley proved particularly popular.

While *WordStorm* falls into the lap of the Darwin writers, we were blessed with a strong contingent from around the Territory, with Alice Springs writers in particular making their presence felt – Rod Moss, Michael Giacometti, Kelly-lee Hickey, Leni Shilton, Jo Dutton all contributed to *WordStorm* in various ways. And there was also a contingent from Tennant Creek stewarded by the stalwart Ktima Heathcote.

Perhaps the biggest thing missing from *WordStorm* in 2012 was the digital realm. While this has been with us for a number of years now (I well remember discussions back in the 1990s at the Australian Society of Authors about e-books, digital rights and the Internet), the impact of these technologies is now really being felt in the world of publishing and literature. Well, it wasn't for want of trying, but timelines and availability just worked against us. Maybe next time.



Indigenous editing forum participants during WordStorm 2012.

## from the heart

Alice Springs is a town in the middle of everywhere and teeming with brilliant writers. It's a pleasure and privilege to be the new Alice Springs Project Officer for the NT Writers Centre and to be able to contribute to the buzzing hive of creation that is the Central Australian arts community.

We kicked off the 2012 Central Australian winter arts program with *Off the Page* on Friday the 13th. Over 80 people crammed into the Soma restaurant to feast on the words of Penny Drysdale, Blair McFarland and Michael Watts. It's inspiring to meet so many people with a passion for words, and I'm keen to keep on hearing ideas from our community of members on how to nurture and promote literary excellence.

Similarly, the 'Re-examining Poetry' masterclass with Leni Shilton on Saturday the 14th was also a great success, with five poets spending the morning discussing the mechanics of poetry, and getting in-depth feedback on their work.

With the Arts NT project round deadlines looming, The Alice Springs NT Writers office offered tailored one-on-one grants clinics for writers interested in developing applications. If you're interested in exploring funding or any other development opportunities, Central Australian members can access three free one-hour sessions with me to discuss suitable opportunities for skills development and publication throughout the year.

In June we presented *Playtime*, a reading of two short plays by Central Australian Playwrights and further on the horizon we have the Central Australian heats of the National Poetry slam, Meet the Publisher and a whole range of workshops and events throughout the year, but that will have to wait till next time.

Until then,

*Kelly lee Hickey*



# territory read

NT book of the year award

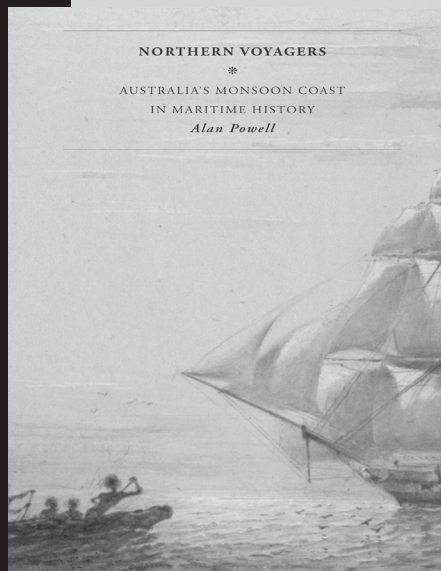
Celebrating the finest in Northern Territory literature

Territory Read NT Book of the Year celebrates the finest in contemporary Northern Territory literature, with \$9,000 in prize money being awarded to winners.



The winner of the 2012 Territory Read, CHIEF MINISTER'S BOOK OF THE YEAR Award is *Northern Voyagers* by Alan Powell. The award carries prize money of \$5,000 from the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

*Northern Voyagers* has also won the 2012 Territory Read, NON-FICTION BOOK OF THE YEAR which comes with a \$2,000 prize from the NT Writers' Centre.

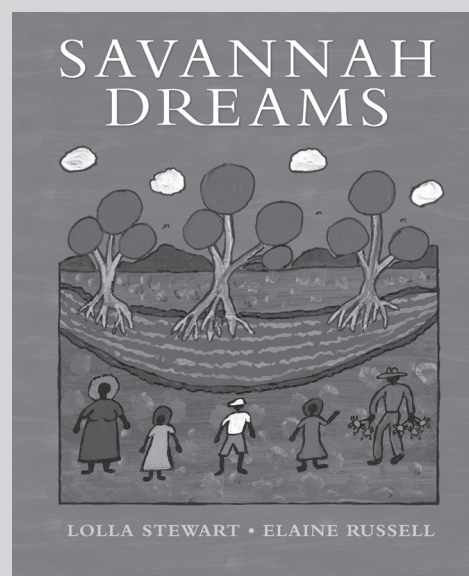


*The maritime history of Australia's monsoon coast, stretching from Broome to Thursday Island, has a known story that is far older, more complex and more redolent of men against the sea than any other coast of the continent. Here came the earliest explorers of Australia, the greatest of her hydrographic surveyors, the whole of her pearling fleets, the trepang and trochus-shell gatherers of the East Indies, the seaborne missionaries of Cape York, Arnhem Land and the Kimberley shore, the bold entrepreneurs who forged and kept open the thin line of sea transport that alone enabled European settlement to survive on that long and lonely coast. This book blends the multiple threads of north coast history into a single concise and colourful story.*



The winner of the 2012 Territory Read, CHILDREN'S LITERATURE/ YOUNG ADULT FICTION Award, also with a \$2,000 prize from the NT Writers' Centre, is *Savannah Dreams* by Lolla Stewart and Elaine Russell.

*From Monday to Saturday, Savannah and her family go looking for bush tucker; herbs, spices and other food. Her parents and siblings find food, while Savannah only finds bits of junk. But Savannah sees the world through different eyes, and her imagination helps her to make the greatest catch of all.*



The Honourable Marion Scrymgour MLA Member for Arafura, presented the prizes to the winners at a ceremony at Parliament House on Thursday 10 May.

The three judges also shortlisted *The Secret of the Lonely Isles* by Joanne van Os and *Being Here* by Barry Jonsberg.

The judges were:

**Alison Croggon** - widely published and frequently awarded writer in many genres, including poetry, prose fiction, theatre and criticism

**Bronwyn Mehan** - published author, freelance editor and teacher of creative writing

**Rod Moss** - writer and visual artist and winner, in 2011, of the CHIEF MINISTER'S BOOK OF THE YEAR award and the Prime Minister's Literary Award – Non Fiction for *The Hard Light of Day*.

*Territory Read*, was inaugurated in 2009. It is an award for published books written by authors who live in the Northern Territory intended to showcase and reward the talent and professional achievements of Territory writers.

*Territory Read* is an initiative of the Northern Territory Writers' Centre and is supported by Copyright Agency Limited.



Copyright Agency  
Cultural Fund



# darwin drama with kate wyvill



After a few years of hiatus, drama in Darwin is again on the rise. Helped by a one-off grant program from the Australia Council (2011's New Territory Fund) a spate of productions is now in the pipeline and actors, directors and writers who have felt some frustration at the direction of funding and policy in this area are now being rewarded for their perseverance. And the theatre sector is getting together of its own accord to work out a road map for the future of NT theatre to put to government, the funding bodies and the major organizations in town.

Kate Wyvill had a hit with her play *The Wardrobe* at the Darwin Entertainment Centre in 2010. In November this year with the help of Brown's Mart Theatre she will produce her new work, *Marbles*, which takes an alternate reflection on the stresses that alzheimers can cause in families.

Kate has been working with the established playwright and scriptwriter Katherine Thomson in developing her script. Katherine Thomson's plays include *Diving for Pearls*, *Barmaids*, and *Mavis Goes to Timor* (which came to the Darwin Festival way back in 2003). Her screenwriting credits include *Wild Side*, *Halifax f.p.* and *G.P.*, the last of which she won an AWGIE award for, and more recently the ABC's *Australia On Trial*.

We spoke to Kate Wyvill about her play and working with Katherine Thomson.

**When did you first start working with Katherine?**

It was in May 2011 at Veruna. I had got one of

the 'Writing for stage and screen' professional development residencies. I went for a week, and Katherine was the mentor for the four writers who were there. We had both one-on-one and group sessions with her.

I had started working on my play *Marbles* and I needed to get away and make time to work. I had spent some months researching background, including the NT's voluntary euthanasia bill. I had the characters and the story line and wanted to go down to Veruna to work with Katherine and start writing.

I thought I was ready to start, but of course when I got there I realised I wasn't ready at all and there was still a lot of work to do.

**What kind of work needed to be done on the play?**

I needed to do a lot of work on the structure and the characters - I needed the skeleton. I had no training in scriptwriting. I had written just one play with two characters, which had taken a couple of years to develop, but I was now attempting something more complex. I found a lot of the terminology new. Character stuff was relatively easy from my training as an actor, though Katherine was still able to give me new perspectives on character development. More difficult for me was dealing with structure, action and plot turning points - things like that.

Acting school had taught me a total structure for acting and character and a way of approaching it. I learnt something similar but for scriptwriting when I went to Veruna and worked with Katherine.

**What was it like working at Veruna?**

I highly recommend going to Veruna. Everything was provided - meals, accommodation - so you can concentrate on writing. You have your own room with a desk. With only four other writers there, it's very intimate. Conversations about writing and what you're working on go long into the night. You get to know each other very quickly. I've kept in touch with a Melbourne playwright and we can continue to help each other a lot.

**And how was your relationship with Katherine Thomson?**

I definitely clicked with her. We have a similar

sense of humour, we're both women and a similar age and have had similar experiences. She likes the play and gets the humour. And our relationship has continued past Veruna - I asked her if she would continue to help with the play and she agreed. So when I finished the first draft I sent it to her. We work via Skype in two-hour blocks - mostly its just talking, but we talk through everything in the play. She won't let you get away with things - sometimes you know something isn't working, but aren't ready to give it up - Katherine lets me know. She is very supportive and engaged in the play. We both want her to come up to Darwin and see the rehearsals. She wants to help make it the best play it can be.

**What happens when you disagree about something? What if you feel she doesn't understand what you're trying to achieve?**

There aren't really times when we don't agree - we talk things through in a lot of detail until understanding is reached.

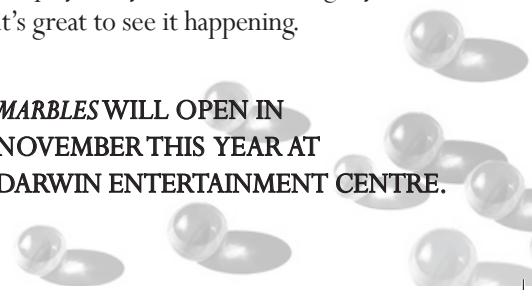
**What has been her influence on the play?**

I think she has had an influence on Kate Wyvill, not on the play. The play is still the play it always was - now it's clearer, sharper, focused, coloured-in, and the whole structure is much stronger. She sets me tasks - e.g. "do the characters' five emotional points" - and I commit to a deadline. It's more like approaching the script from underneath rather than particular edits or re-writes; and a lot of detailed discussion.

**And now you have a big deadline looming.**

Yes. The play needs to be finished by the end of August, and Katherine is coming up for some sessions with the actors in early August. I have to be disciplined - it's easy to procrastinate and there's life to attend to and unfortunately you can't lock yourself away in a garret. But we have already had one reading of an excerpt at the Monsoon Sessions and that got a few laughs, and I'm feeling good about the script. It's very exciting. I've had the play in my head for about eight years and it's great to see it happening.

**MARBLES WILL OPEN IN NOVEMBER THIS YEAR AT DARWIN ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE.**





# competitions awards

## THE ASIALINK WRITING PROGRAM

Connects Australian writers, readers and publishers with their counterparts in Asia. We run immersive in-country residencies, high-profile author tours, collaborative cross-media projects, produce engaging books, and organise national and international public events.

Round opens: 3 July 2012

Round closes: 3 September 2012

## THE JOHN MARSDEN PRIZE FOR YOUNG AUSTRALIAN WRITERS

Express Media and John Marsden are pleased to announce that entries are now open. Writers under the age of 25 are urged to enter the competition to share in \$5,500 in prize money and have the opportunity to be published online and in the December issue of *Voiceworks*, Express Media's literary quarterly.

Entries close 3 September 2012.

## NATURE CONSERVANCY NATURE WRITING PRIZE

The \$5,000 biennial award is for an essay between 3,000 and 5,000 words in the genre of 'writing of place.' The prize will be awarded to an Australian writer whose entry is judged to be of the highest literary merit and which best explores his or her relationship and interaction with some aspect of the Australian landscape.

Writers can register their expression of interest in the prize at [natureaustralia.org.au](http://natureaustralia.org.au) or by e-mailing [Australia@tnc.org](mailto:Australia@tnc.org)

Applications close: 16 November 2012

## 2012 AUSTRALIAN SHADOWS AWARDS

The Australian Horror Writers Association. The awards are open to submission of any horror fiction published (or anthologies edited) by an Australian/New Zealand/Oceania resident or citizen in the 2012 calendar year.

The award has five categories: Novel; Long Fiction (novellas and novelettes); Short Fiction (short stories); Collection (single author collections); and Edited Publication (anthologies and magazine issues).

Details can be found on the AHWA website at:

<http://australianhorror.com/index.php?view=39>

All enquiries to Robert Datson:

[australianshadows@australianhorror.com](mailto:australianshadows@australianhorror.com)

Submissions accepted until February 28th 2013.

## \$20,000 RODNEY SEABORN PLAYWRIGHT'S AWARD

The Award is offered each year for the development of a play or other approved performing arts project, and is intended for those needing income and support during the writing or development of a project or to assist with costs of production, workshops, restaging, publishing or touring. It is not intended as a prize for a finished work.

Entry form and details at: [www.sbwfoundation.com](http://www.sbwfoundation.com).

Closes 3 October.

## 9th PETER PORTER POETRY PRIZE

Entry to the ninth annual Peter Porter Poetry Prize closes 30 November 2012.

The Peter Porter Poetry Prize, which honours the great Australian poet Peter Porter (1929–2010), is one of Australia's most lucrative and respected awards for poetry, and guarantees winners wide exposure through publication in *Australian Book Review*. The guidelines and entry form are now available from the ABR website: [www.australianbookreview.com.au](http://www.australianbookreview.com.au)

Poets must be Australian citizens or have permanent residence status in Australia. Each entry must be a single poem of no more than 100 lines. Multiple entries are permitted, and all poems will be judged anonymously. A shortlist comprising a maximum of six poems will be announced and those poems published in the March 2013 issue of ABR. The winner will be announced later that month.

## in celebration of National Poetry Week

poetry readings by

**Claine Keily and Sandra Thibodeaux**

**Monday 3 September, 12-1pm**



**at the Four Birds Cafe,  
Shop 2, Star Arcade, Smith Street, Darwin**

**SPONSORED BY AUSTRALIAN POETRY**

# opportunities prizes...

## THE INAUGURAL OVERLAND VICTORIA UNIVERSITY SHORT STORY PRIZE FOR NEW & EMERGING WRITERS

In continuing with their long tradition of championing new and emerging writers, *Overland* is pleased to be launching the Overland Victoria University Short Story Prize for New and Emerging Writers. It has a grand first prize of \$6000 and two runner-up prizes of \$1000. Entries are \$18 (full) and \$12 for subscribers (current, new and renewing).

Competition opens early July. Guidelines and submission details are available at: <http://overland.org.au/prizes/>

## FABLECROFT PUBLISHING - CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

FableCroft Publishing is calling for submissions to a new anthology. Tentatively titled *One Small Step*, stories must in some way address the idea of discoveries, new beginnings, or literal or figurative 'small steps'. The rest is limited only by your imagination! More information on the FableCroft website - <http://fablecroft.com.au/books/new-anthology-call-for-submissions-july> Submissions open July 1.

## 10th KATHLEEN JULIA BATES MEMORIAL WRITING COMPETITION

For an unpublished short story to 1,000 words suitable to be read by children aged 7 to 10 years. The theme is open but the main character should be human. All entries are to have a separate title page with full contact details and to include a stamped self addressed envelope for results. No emailed entries. Manuscripts will not be returned. Entry fee \$10 per story; money order or cheque payable to Di Bates, or payment online (apply to [dibates@pacific.net.au](mailto:dibates@pacific.net.au) for details). All entries will receive a score sheet with comments as well as a results' sheet. Open to Australian residents only. There is no limit on number of stories entered. Prizes: \$200 first prize, \$100 second prize with three runners-up to receive an online writing module valued at \$75 [www.enterprisingwords.com](http://www.enterprisingwords.com). Judge will be award-winning children's author and editor, Dianne (Di) Bates. Entries close on Monday, 29 October, 2012. Send entries c% Di Bates, PO Box 2116, Woonona East NSW 2517.

## SPINELESS WONDERS AUDIO

Spineless Wonders is currently accepting submissions for Earworms, its audio program. Submissions can be from 5 to 50 minutes duration and in any genre.

More information: <http://shortaustralianstories.com.au/submissions/>

## PALMERSTON FESTIVAL: Palmerston Writers read their work

Saturday 1 September at 1pm in Palmerston Library Community room. Free Event

## Write turn

It's your turn to write for *Write Turn*.

Discovered a fab new book exchange website? Had an epiphany about character development that needs to be shared with the world? Have a strong opinion on that relevant cultural thing that just happened? Write Turn has several member article spaces available each issue just waiting to be filled. You can write, right? So why not write for us? Just email [info@ntwriters.com.au](mailto:info@ntwriters.com.au) with an idea for a submission for the next issue.



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Got an opportunity or competition to get out there? Let us know so that we can spread the word for you!  
Email [info@ntwriters.com.au](mailto:info@ntwriters.com.au) with the details.

And don't forget to let us know if you have a writing success so we can share that too.

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# at the festival

We went behind the scenes with the local playwrights involved in this year's Darwin Festival to get a bit of insight into where their work comes from.



## T H E F I R S T G A R D E N

In something of a coup for them, *The First Garden* by Alice Springs pair Chris and Natasha Raja, about botanist and land rights activist Olive Pink has been accepted for publication by Currency Press, the pioneering publisher of Australian drama – after they sent it in as an unsolicited manuscript.

The Rajas were encouraged to write about Olive Pink by Ben Convery, Curator of the Olive Pink Botanic Gardens in Alice Springs. Ben had seen a play that Chris Raja had written for the Byte Size season of short (10 minute) plays in Alice Springs, which in turn came from a short story Chris had published in *Southerly*. After absorbing Julie Marcus's biography of Olive Pink, the husband and wife team set about dramatising her life. The result is *The First Garden*, which was first staged as a site-specific work in the Olive Pink Botanic Gardens during the Alice Desert Festival in 2011. It's popularity has seen it re-staged there in 2012 before travelling to Darwin for the Darwin Festival season in August.

A Territory icon, Olive Pink's story is ripe for dramatisation. In October 1956, at the age of 72, she set up her tent on the grounds of what is now Olive Pink Botanic Garden. From this tranquil location she lobbied NT politicians vigorously to establish a flora reserve to protect native flora and provide a site where locals could visit and learn about desert environments. Often regarded as eccentric and cantankerous, she had long campaigned – largely through incessant letter-writing – on Aboriginal issues, having immersed herself through what she called 'contact anthropology' in the culture of the Warlpiri and Aranda people of the Tanami Desert.

*The First Garden* is on from 22-25 August at the Cycad Garden in the George Brown Botanic Gardens.



## T H E L I O N T A M E R

Two weeks before an election, a candidate breaks his restraining order...

Inspired by the 2010 federal election campaign, *The Lion Tamer* examines the revolving farce of regional politics. Part tragedy, part political satire, *The Lion Tamer* follows the journey of Max, an ex-cricketer and would-be MLA, whose personal life is shredded while his political life becomes more and more of a circus. Geese, acrobats and clowns all bear down upon Max, who is always just one step ahead of the hungry lions from the NT News.

Poet and playwright Sandra Thibodeaux's political farce *The Lion Tamer* has a timely reading on the day Darwin goes to the polls. Set in a big top it follows the real life circus of state elections.

Presented in association with Brown's Mart Theatre. Dramaturgy & direction by Alex Galeazzi.



# at the festival

## HIGHWAY OF LOST HEARTS

On May 1 2008, a boat accident on Sydney Harbour killed six young people. Darwin based Savannah Holloway was amongst them. She was 25 years old, a dedicated youth worker and an utterly positive life force. Her death made no sense, and I couldn't reconcile this random and brutal event.

In December 2009 I drove from Darwin to Sydney Harbour to get as close to the place of Savannah's death as possible. Driving down that highway, everything was heightened. The landscape was brittle and harsh and bone dry. Death was everywhere: eking out of the roadside carcasses, and bleeding out of the thick red dust. My life felt tenuous and uncertain, and I was truly empty.

I met the strangest people en route, and to me it seemed that everyone was broken in some way. Small scattered pieces of people strewn across the vast empty spaces and towns of this country's central artery.

At Sydney Harbour I sat at night, looking at the churning water. I thought of Savannah, under there somewhere – some small bits of her DNA still there, swilling around in this massive body of water; a life force and a death force all at the same time. And this realisation – that although she was dead, bits of her were still here in some form or other - gave me back some kind of peace.

I then entered a full week of writing workshop in Melbourne, with the legendary Jenny Kemp and wrote up the events of my road journey - which became Mot's journey. ['Mot' means 'death' in Ugaritic]. Writing from an outside character's perspective enabled me to distance myself, and gain some objectivity. A lot of what 'really' happened on that road became the seed for a fictionalized account, and I lost the boundaries between 'fact' and 'fiction'.

I ended up with 35 pages of typed notes: scraps, scenes, diagrams, dialogue – and wrote a first draft. The road journey itself lent a certain structure, but I was still unclear of what I was really saying. Dramaturg Peter Matheson gave me a pivotal clue which unlocked Mot's character arc,

helping me see her as a woman who could not be touched – literally and metaphorically. This became a vital thematic thread.

Then director Lee Lewis shaped elements of it for a 2010 Darwin festival reading. She observed that: 'Mot's journey to find her heart is a metaphor for the fact that this country has lost its heart,' – which gave me the overriding metaphor for the piece. 'Highway of Lost Hearts' became more than just a road trip, and became instead the very human journey of a woman trying to re-gain her heart [literally and metaphorically] - and with it, her will to move on in life.

*Mary Anne Butler*

*Highway of Lost Hearts* premiered at the 2012 Darwin Festival, directed by Lee Lewis and performed by Mary Anne Butler. Set design by Kris Bird, sound design Panos Couros and lighting design Sean Pardy. Co-produced by Browns Mart Arts and Mary Anne Butler.



# darwin poetry cup



**August 16:** Thursday night at the Railway Club and the punters and poets gathered for the 17th annual Darwin Poetry Cup – defying whatever was on at the Darwin Festival to support local poetry.

The theme of the night was beatnik – striped shirts, skivvies, berets, straight skirts and black tights – but most of the crowd seemed content with their

every day gear. But our impresario, Steve Holliday, the MC Steve Moore and the Stolen Beat band impressed with their dedication to the theme and the mood.

A field of twenty or so poets took to the stage to read everything from bush rhymes to limericks and beyond. Some defied the one-minute time limit and found themselves disqualified; others added to the evening by offering up

their readings, but not as part of the competition.

The judging of the poetry cup is strictly objective. The loudness and length of the applause is all the judges can take into account when awarding the prizes. So, the most popular poet wins, with the sole exception of one prize which can be awarded at the discretion of the judges.

The eventual winner was Barry Brown, with the lyrical 'I Love This Town' – a poem that was as much about its performance as its text (see back page). Second was Mandy Peters, and the judges' discretionary prize went to Kaye Aldenhoven.

The winners went home with brilliant prizes, courtesy of Read Back Books, Parap Fine Foods, Parap Village Tavern, Jackson's Art Supplies, the NT Writers' Centre, and the Railway Club.

After the awards, the evening kicked on with Debbie Jagoe stepping up for an impromptu performance with the band..

Look out for the Darwin Poetry Cup next year!

## writers' centre opportunities



**darwin fridge festival**  
world's coolest festival

### Darwin Fridge Festival: *Off The Page*

You might be sweltering in the build up, but you can cool down with the Darwin Fridge Festival in October. As writers, we know how to transcend our surroundings and we're looking for writers who can turn their muse from the tropical to the temperate (or even arctic) to perform at *Off the Page* during the Fridge Festival. The date is Friday 19 October and the venue is Happy Yess. Let us know if you are interested or send in a submission.

The Fridge festival also has two writing workshops with Karen Manton and Sandra Thibodeaux. Check out the program for all the details (out soon).

### ***Off the Leash: Get Your Work Published!***

Every month our local arts mag, *Off the Leash*, allocates around one page to publish the work of a local writer. This could be a poem or two, a short story, or an extract from a script or novel. *Off the Leash* has a wide readership around Darwin and is the magazine everyone goes to to find out what's happening in the arts. So, if you're looking for a little exposure or have a piece that you've been dying to get into print, or even want to see how something goes down - send it in with a headshot and bio. We will assess the entries and send our selection to *Off the Leash*. But remember, *Off the Leash* prepare their magazine about a month ahead, so get something into us by the end of August to go into the October issue.





# poetry workshop

with Kaye Aldenhoven



get published

learn to critique and evaluate poetry

work with an established and award-winning poet

Award-winning Darwin poet, Kaye Aldenhoven, will conduct an on-line poetry workshop for six weeks from mid-September. At the end of the workshop, a chapbook will be published containing poems of the participants and noted Territory poets.

The workshop will take place on-line via e-mail. Each week a poem by a prominent Territory poet will be discussed. Workshop participants will also submit a poem each week, which will be examined using the concepts from the general discussion.

Places are available for up to eight poets.

	Cost is:	
Full		\$90
Conc		\$80
NTWC Members		\$70

To apply, submit two of your poems to:  
[executive@ntwriters.com.au](mailto:executive@ntwriters.com.au)  
along with a biographical note  
and what you hope to learn from the workshop.

Poetry

## nt writing groups

darwin/palmerston

DAGS: The Darwin Authors' Group is an informal network of Darwin-based writers with a common interest in sharing and discussing the craft and business of writing. Writers of all genres welcome. The group generally meets at the Frog Hollow Centre for the Arts Conference Room on the second Thursday of each month. All welcome. For further information contact Sopihe: [sophieanddarryl@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sophieanddarryl@yahoo.co.uk) Or Rohan: [princessrohani@gmail.com](mailto:princessrohani@gmail.com)

POW: Palmerston Own Writers meet at the Community Room, Palmerston Library, on the first Wednesday of every month from 5:30-7pm. All welcome. Contact Sandra Parker on [t]: (08) 8988 2172 or [e]: [sandra@parkershouse.net](mailto:sandra@parkershouse.net).

The Fellowship of Australian Writers is currently in recess and urgently requires a new facilitator. FAW has a strong nation wide history. If you are interested in reviving the Darwin chapter of FAW, please contact: Ted Kilpatrick on 8948 1216.

## other regions

A NEW GROUP FOR ARNHEM LAND: is now meeting in Nhulunbuy. For more information, contact Ian Maclean on E: [ian@nightsskysecrets.com](mailto:ian@nightsskysecrets.com)

ALICE WRITERS' GROUP Currently the group is meeting at 5.30pm @ redHOT Arts on the first Tuesday of the month.

KATHERINE REGION OF WRITERS: Contact ROYELENE HILL: [albalea7@bigpond.com](mailto:albalea7@bigpond.com) for more information.

## nt support networks

The NT Film Office provides advice on locations, policy, industry contacts and production matters, and offers support through annual grants programs. T: 8951 1162. email: [film.office@nt.gov.au](mailto:film.office@nt.gov.au)

The Australian Writers' Guild is the peak national organisation for writers working in screen, theatre, radio and performance. [w]: [www.awg.com.au](http://www.awg.com.au).

If you know of local writers' groups open to new members, please let us know!

# I love this town

by Barry Brown

Aah, yeah, I love this town.  
 How do you do?  
 My name is Barry Brown.  
 I'm here to declare my love for this town.  
 If you agree with me, let's hear it resound:  
 "Aah, yeah, I love this town."

The folks livin' here are the finest I've found.  
 They like to get up and they love to get down.  
 I've met singers and dancers and poets and clowns.  
 "Aah, yeah, I love this town."

Natural wonders abundant profusely abound  
 From the bright sky above right down to the ground  
 I've seen *huge* banyan trees *this big* around.  
 "Aah, yeah, I love this town."

I sniffed out this place like a hungry bloodhound  
 If there was a king of small cities, this place should be crowned  
 It has brought to my soul revelations profound.  
 "Aah, yeah, I love this town."

Its qualities I will always expound.  
 You know why? ...  
 "Aah, yeah, I love this town."  
 "Aah, yeah, I love this town."  
 Everybody, one more time: "Aah, yeah, I love this town."



Barry Brown is this month's winner of the Coriole poem prize. For your chance to win, email your poem to [executive@ntwriters.com.au](mailto:executive@ntwriters.com.au)



a publication of the nt writers' centre

## ntwc membership form

Name ..... Organisation .....

Postal address .....

Phone ..... Mobile ..... Email .....

Published? Yes / No .....

Writing Interests .....

New Member  Renewal

Membership category (Please circle): Organisation - \$70 / Waged - \$55 /

Concession/Freelance - \$45 Concession no: .....

With your membership, we'd also like to offer you the opportunity to make a donation. You will receive a tax deductible receipt for your support.

\$20 \$50 Other

Payment: Cash / Credit Card / Cheque (payable to NT Writers' Centre)

Please charge my: Mastercard  Visa  Bankcard

Total \$ .....

My card number is: \_\_\_\_\_

Valid from ..... Expiry date .....

Cardholder's name .....

Signature of Cardholder .....

### Office Use Only

Member until.....

Receipt No.....

Membership No.....

Date processed.....

Database  Letter

Please return form & payment to:

NT Writers' Centre Inc  
 GPO Box 2255  
 Darwin, NT 0801

T: (08) 8941 2651  
 F: (08) 8941 2115

E: [info@ntwriters.com.au](mailto:info@ntwriters.com.au)  
[www.ntwriters.com.au](http://www.ntwriters.com.au)