

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIAN WRITERS QUEENSLAND (FAWQ)

This edition of SCOPE magazine is volume 72 No. 3

SCOPE

June / July Edition

CONTENTS

**FOR WINTER READING
CLICK HERE
TO CHOOSE BY GENRE
AUSTRALIAN AUTHORS**

**ATTENTION
Premier Networking
Event.**

**Award Winning Author
Jo Skinner
BOOK NOW!**

FAWQ

Fellowship of Australian Writers
Queensland

Supporting emerging writers since 1921

CLICK TOPIC TO ACCESS.

[About FAWQ](#)

[Editor's Notes - Events + Submission Details](#)

[From the President's Pen](#)

[Members Awards and Achievements](#)

[FAWQ Networking Event - Jo Skinner - Award Winning Author](#)

[Hawkeye Publishing - Sydney Hammond Short Story Competition](#)

[Discover the New Haiku Group in Brisbane](#)

[Article - 'Send Your Friend a Letter' - Sally Eberhardt](#)

[Article - 'Tips on Marketing on Facebook' - DIY - By Russell Perry](#)

[Article - Writing Insights - By Jo Skinner](#)

[Flash Fiction - The The Last Empty Page - Peter Carseldine](#)

[Flash Fiction - Perished and Forgotten - Danijela Hiis](#)

[Flash Fiction - Hector's Story - Susan Skowronski](#)

[Flash Fiction - Well Being in the Wild - Susan Skowronski](#)

[Short Story - Mannequins - Peter Carseldine](#)

[Poetry - 'A Moment in Time' by Jo Skinner](#)

[Poetry - by Susan Skowronski](#)

[A Poem - Cash in Advance - by John Nolan](#)

[A Poetry Collection - By Mocco Wollert](#)

[A Poem by Sally Eberhardt - 'There's no Place Like a Horse.](#)



Members Featured Books

FAWQ

Fellowship of Australian Writers
Queensland
Supporting emerging writers since 1921



Office bearers for FAWQ 2024:

President	Dr. Jim Page.	president@fawq.com.au
Secretary	Lexcia Dalton	secretary@fawq.com.au
Treasurer	Virginia Miranda	treasurer@fawq.com.au
Webmanager	Russell Perry	webmanager@fawq.com.au
Scope Editor	Sally Eberhardt	editor@fawq.com.au
Functions Manager	Rosalie Webb	functions@fawq.com.au
Functions Manager	Verity Croker	functions@fawq.com.au

SCOPE Editors

Russell Perry editor@fawq.com.au
Sally Eberhardt editor@fawq.com.au

SCOPE is a bi-monthly magazine, depicting all things literary, from Members' writings to articles and information for writers and readers.

Featuring stories, poetry and articles submitted by FAWQ members.

SCOPE is published by the Fellowship of Australian Writers - Qld.

The Fellowship is dedicated to the nurturing and support of writers of all ages and levels, bringing them together in a connected community since 1921.

Join the Fellowship to immerse yourself in the Queensland writing community and become eligible to submit your work for the chance of publication.

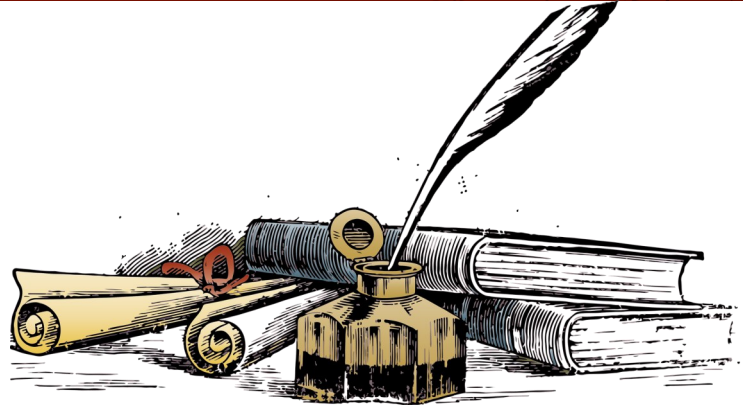
[Click Here](#) to Join or renew.

Join Our Fellowship



[click here](#)

CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS



Editor's Notes from Sally and Russell.

MEMBERS:

Please feel free to submit your recent achievements or milestones, as well as letters to the editor regarding points of interest, events or suggestions. We will attempt to fit them in.



JOIN WITH US AT FAWQ

AND HAVE YOUR WORK PUBLISHED

[CLICK HERE](#)

WE NEED MORE SHORT STORIES AND ARTICLES

Please insure that these are submitted by the 15th of the month before each issue. That is:

February/March -15th January

April/May — 15th March

June/July —15th May

August/September—15th July

October/November—15th September

December/January—15th November.

Short stories, flash fiction, poetry and articles can be submitted at any time, as, if they miss an issue, they can be considered for the next.

[Click Here for Submission Guidelines](#)

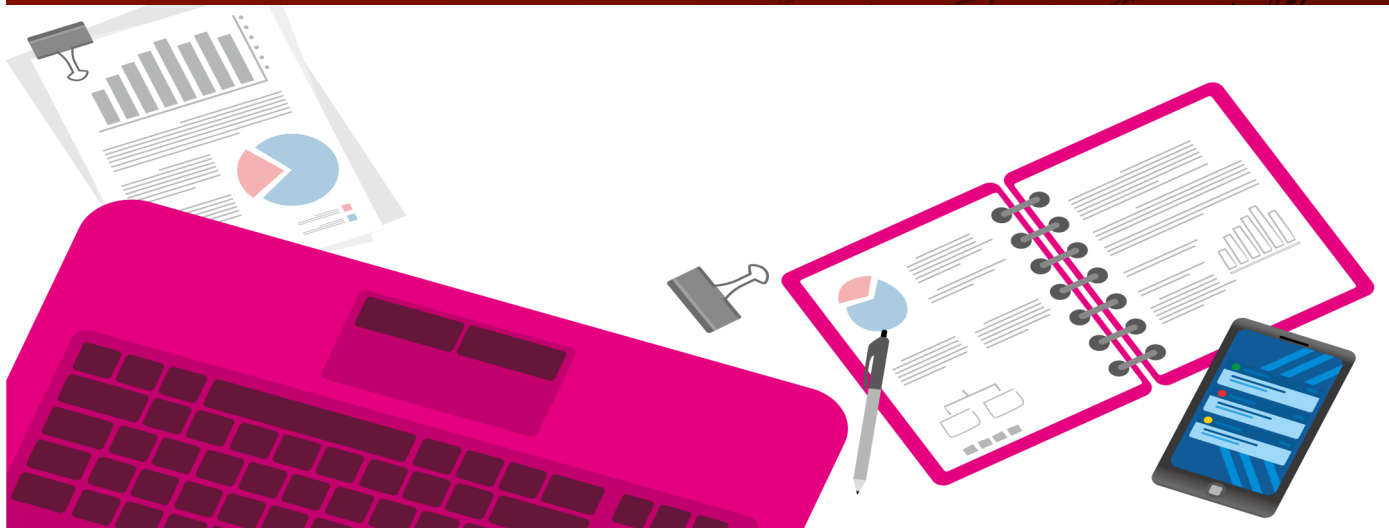
A quote that Sally found for all writers out there

'There is no hierarchy of stories. Only stories that move people, and stories that don't.

Write what you love. And be loud and proud about it.'

Valerie Khoo | National Director | Australian Writers' Centre

**[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**



From the President's Desk.

President's Report.

Welcome to this edition of Scope. Two recent FAWQ events warrant comment. One is the launch by FAWQ member David Jones of his novel *Beyond the Waterfall*, centred on the New England region, specifically Armidale, where he grew up. This book has raised an interesting question: why is it sometimes so difficult for us to write about familiar locales and about people, or at least the sort of people, with which we are most familiar? Perhaps more on that later.

I mention also the FAWQ author event with winner of the The Australian Fiction Award, Troy Henderson, author of *Head Grenade* and the forthcoming *River City*. Troy reflected on the importance of competitions for writers. One question from the audience was how can authors best deal with writer's block. Troy's answer was that he likes to work by routine, which for him, means doing an hour of writing every morning. Perhaps more on that later, as well.

We've an upcoming author event with FAWQ member Jo Skinner. Check out her website – Running Writing. I think her work raises interesting and important issues about sex and gender. I should mention that we are placed to partner with the Eumundi Writers Festival, a Sunshine Coast event which punches well above its weight. And we are also pleased to announce that our own Lexcia Dalton is official FAWQ representative at the upcoming Outback Writers Festival, in Winton, Western Queensland.

Keep writing, and I look forward to meeting you at one of our events.

(Dr) Jim Page

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)



image by [Prawnny](#) from [Pixabay](#)

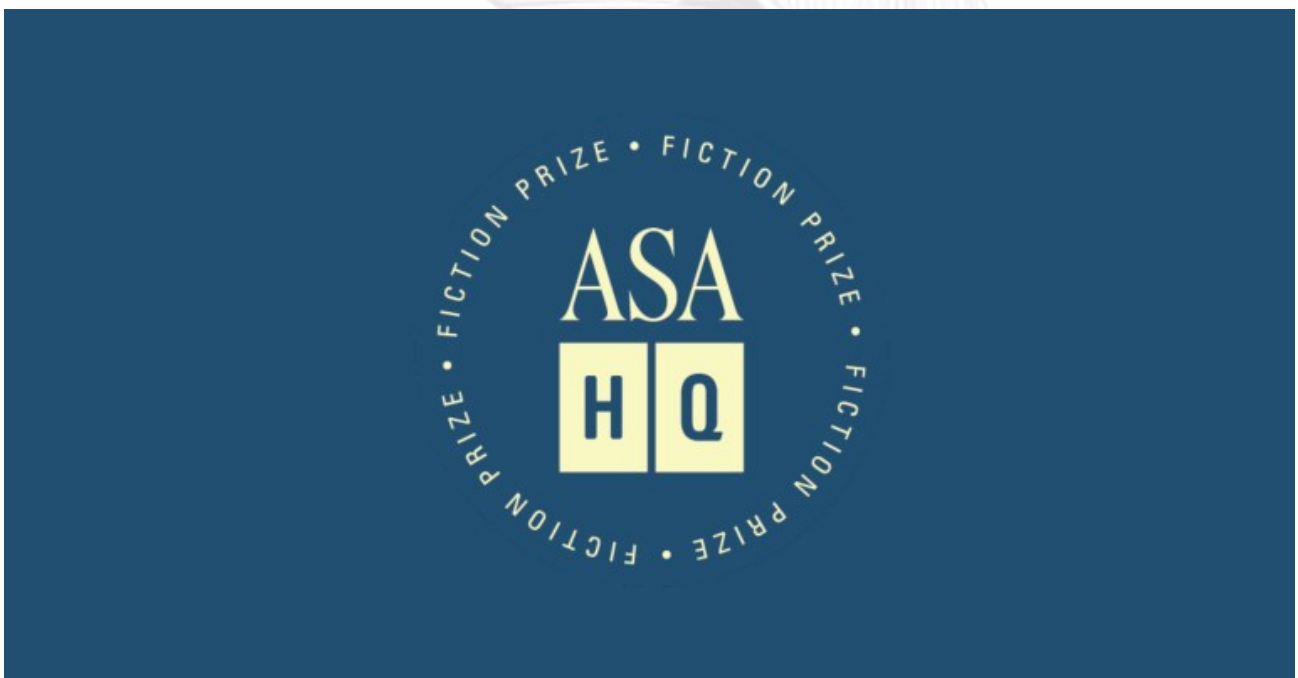
Members Achievements.

Congratulations Jo Skinner on yet another literary achievement.

Jo said she was absolutely thrilled to be short listed for the [ASA/HQ award](#) a couple of weeks ago. "I did not make the final cut but an agent has reached out and is interested in my book so fingers crossed."

Jo was also long-listed in last month's Furious Fiction Writing Competition for her story 'Neighbourhood Watch'.

CLICK THE IMAGE FOR MORE INFORMATION:



[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)



image by [Prawny](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Members Achievements.

Major achievements during May for prolific member:

Mocco Wollert

Achievements – Milestones – May 2026

Your Time Magazine:

Column – Public Toilets May 2026

Senior Digest USA

Column – Making Decisions May 2026

Poem – Spring May 2026

Quadrant Magazine

Poem – Domestic Violence May 2026

Poem – Elgar's Violin Concerto May 2026

Poem – Walking Oxford Street May 2026

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)



image by [Prawny](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Members Achievements.

Major achievements for Member Susan Skowronski.

Following is an article by Susan on her achievement.

Tail Spin.

I recently received a phone call which sent me into a tail spin. Unbelievable! So exciting. My emotions swung wildly between joy and fear, anticipation and apprehension. Such an honour, but could I do it? An invitation to be involved in the Sydney Writers' Festival was a huge surprise.

Two years ago, I was packing a suitcase, getting ready to attend a conference in Sydney. On that occasion, I was also filled with excitement. Three days spent with respected colleagues, and an opportunity to meet new people, compare stories and share ideas. In my haste, I tripped over the sandals I intended to pack, wacked my head on the edge of the door, smashed into the door frame and landed on the tiled floor. I didn't make it to the conference. Would I overcome my fear now, and accept the invitation? Could I really board a plane and fly to Sydney?

Then came the good news. Zoom! Isn't technology wonderful? No need for fear. I don't have to try to board a plane while using a wheelie walker. I will be part of a panel discussion right here at the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba. How amazing is that? I could be a part of the Sydney Writers' Festival without packing a suitcase. The program is on The Empire's website: <https://empiretheatre.com.au/whats-on/sydney-writers-festival-26> The Supper Room is upstairs at The Empire, and the sessions are 'beamed in' live from Sydney. Our in-conversation panel sessions are threaded throughout the program. This shows how much we can achieve when we collaborate, and provides an opportunity for local writers to benefit from 'attending' the headline events from one of Australia's leading writers' festivals.

Needless to say, I agreed to appear with two local poets from 11 am to 12 on Saturday 23rd May 2026.

CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS



image by [Prawny](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Members Achievements.

Further April/May Credits for Member Susan Skowronski.

Feb - May 2026

Free Xpression Magazine Feb 26 Issue

Article: World Wetlands Day

Poem: Evening Entertainers

Free Xpression Magazine March 26 Issue

Article: A Spirit of Adventure and a Pocketful of Hope

Poem: Old House

Free Xpression Magazine April 26 Issue

Article: Weekend at the Bunya Mountains

Poem: Bunya Mountains

Free Xpression Magazine May 26 Issue

Article: Tailspin

Namalata Magazine Autumn 26

Poem: Forest after Rain

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

FAWQ Special Event—Featuring Jo Skinner

Jo will be highlighting ‘Page Fright’ or more commonly known as ‘Writers Block’.

Venue – Redcliffe Library at 2.00pm on Saturday 29th August – followed by lucky door prizes, afternoon tea and networking.

Members:\$10 Non-members:\$15 - [BOOK HERE](#)



Jo had her first story published when she was in primary school where she won a writing competition with her winning entry being placed into a time capsule.

She became very ill in high school and was admitted to hospital for several months. This sparked her interest in studying medicine. Writing took a back seat for a long time with study, work and having a family taking precedence. The urge to write persisted like an itch and finally, in 2018, she signed up to do her first writing course with The Writers’ Studio and loved it so much, she signed up for several more with the Australian Writers Centre and Queensland Writers Centre. Once she found the courage to submit her work, she began to place in competitions and her non-fiction pieces are regularly published in medical journals and popular magazines.

Her great love is writing contemporary women’s fiction. In August 2023, she was delighted to get a phone call from Carolyn Martinez of Hawkeye Publishing advising she had a contract for her novel, *The Truth about My Daughter*. In 2024, she signed a second contract for her novel, *A World of Silence*.

Acclaimed Author – Jo Skinner, will address the problems associated with ‘Writers Block’ or ‘Page Fright’.

Venue and Time – Redcliffe Library at 2.00pm on Saturday 29th August

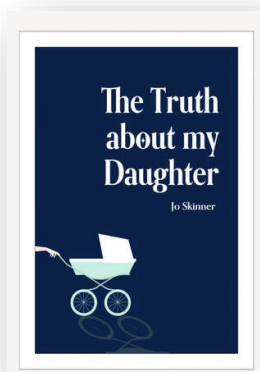
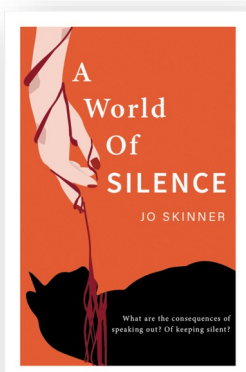
Followed by lucky door prizes, afternoon tea and networking.

Meet and chat with Jo.

Members:\$10 Non-members:\$15 – Book on the form below.

[BOOK NOW](#)

Click book covers to purchase.



**[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**



The 2026 Sydney Hammond Memorial Short Story Competition Is Now Open!

Can you write a story that can grip a reader in just 1,000 words? Enter our 2026 Sydney Hammond Short Story Competition and bring the theme I'm Glad You Called to life with emotional impact, rising tension, and a powerful climax.

That simple phrase – I'm Glad You Called – can hold relief, dread, gratitude, humour, or even regret, depending on who says it and why. Perhaps you'll consider stories where the call changes something – perhaps it interrupts a life-altering decision, reconnects estranged people, delivers unexpected news, or arrives from someone the caller never expected to hear from. You might explore different genres: a suspenseful late-night call that prevents a disaster, a romantic reconnection sparked by a wrong number, a speculative tale where the call comes across time or from beyond, or a quiet, emotional story where the act of reaching out is the true turning point. Focus on the emotional shift contained in that one sentence – what it meant before the call, and how everything feels after it's spoken.

Feeling inspired? We look forward to reading your entry.

First Prize:

A ticket to the Children and Young Adult (CYA) Conference for 2026 (valued at \$410)

\$200 Cash Prize

Anthology cover based on the winner's story.

Second - Fourth Prize:

A year-long membership to the Queensland Writers Centre (valued at \$79).

Plus:

Top 40 stories published in our I'm Glad You Called anthology

All published entrants receive a free digital copy

With an \$18.50AUD entry fee and high-value prizes on offer, this is your chance to elevate your writing and get your story into readers' hands.



Sydney Hammond

ENTRIES CLOSE 6PM AEST FRIDAY 7 AUGUST 2026

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)



Image by [Marie](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Water Dragons Haiku

Group: Meets on Saturday mornings (typically around 10:30 am to 1:00 pm) at the Brisbane Square Library in the CBD. This supportive group discusses haiku, tanka, and haibun and welcomes new members. You can reach out directly to the group's convenor, Duncan Richardson, at duncrich@outlook.com.

What is a Haiku?

A haiku is a short, unrhymed Japanese poetic form consisting specifically of 17 syllables arranged in three lines – the first line to be 5 syllables, the second line to be 7 syllables, and the third line 5 syllables.

Haikus traditionally focus on the natural world or the changing seasons, at a specific moment in time.

A classic example –



Image by [M. Roth](#) from [Pixabay](#)

This famous poem by classical poet Matsuo Basho perfectly demonstrates the form:

An old pond! (5 syllables)

A frog jumps in— (7 syllables)

The sound of water. (5 syllables)

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Send Your Friend a Letter

An Article by Sally Eberhardt

Don't wait until they're gone. Tell people what they mean to you because we never know when it will be too late.



'I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel' — Maya Angelou

An old friend has been on my mind lately. I've been thinking about her a lot - I'm not even sure why. We aren't really close anymore.

I have no sense of impending doom for either of us. All I know is that I feel compelled to write and thank her for the part she has played in my life. As I look back, I find that few images or events are very clear. But yes, Maya Angelou is right — what I remember is how she made me feel.

The letter is ready to post today.

It's handwritten, enclosed in a card (above) illustrated with fuchsias as they remind me of Tasmania - where we first met and where I spent some wonderful childhood years. It chronicles my memories of her, from the earliest to most recent — and I am stunned by both how much I have forgotten and how much is burnt into my brain.

Don't hang on to the words, only releasing them when it's too late to share them with the person to whom they matter most. You never know when your or anyone's time is up. Celebrate relationships, friendships and connections now.

Wouldn't you like to know if you have been a positive influence in someone's life? How about acknowledging those who have been a positive influence in yours?

It doesn't have to be an epic saga — a simple note can mean the world. You could make someone realise that their life has more meaning and impact than they thought. It's a beautiful gift to give — a gift of gratitude for their existence and their place in your life.

If you don't know where to start, you may like to do as I have done — start at the beginning, at the earliest memories, and progress from there.

The main point is that you say 'Thank you' — that's what really matters. Open your heart and tell someone of their place in it — while you still have the chance.

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)



Photo by [Debby Hudson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

I thought of sharing the letter with you all but it's deeply personal and not just mine to share. What I will say is that it thanks someone who gave of themselves unselfishly and without thought of receiving in return; someone who was there for me on one of the worst days of my life; someone who was the epitome of patience and kindness.

I am sure I don't remember even a tenth of what she did for me as a child, and she probably doesn't think she has done anything for me as an adult. But she has ... and I want her to know.

The whole process has been cathartic too. I've felt some guilt and shame at how unaware I

was, how much I took her kindness and selflessness for granted in my callow youth. She was so very, very good to me. I'm not sure I can say the same in return.

Now I confess, apologize and beg forgiveness ... knowing full well she holds no grudges and will most likely proclaim that there is nothing to forgive. That's just typical of her beautiful, caring heart. Her presence in my world has made my life better and made me a better person - I am eternally grateful for all she is and all she does.

She makes this world a better place — and she deserves to know.

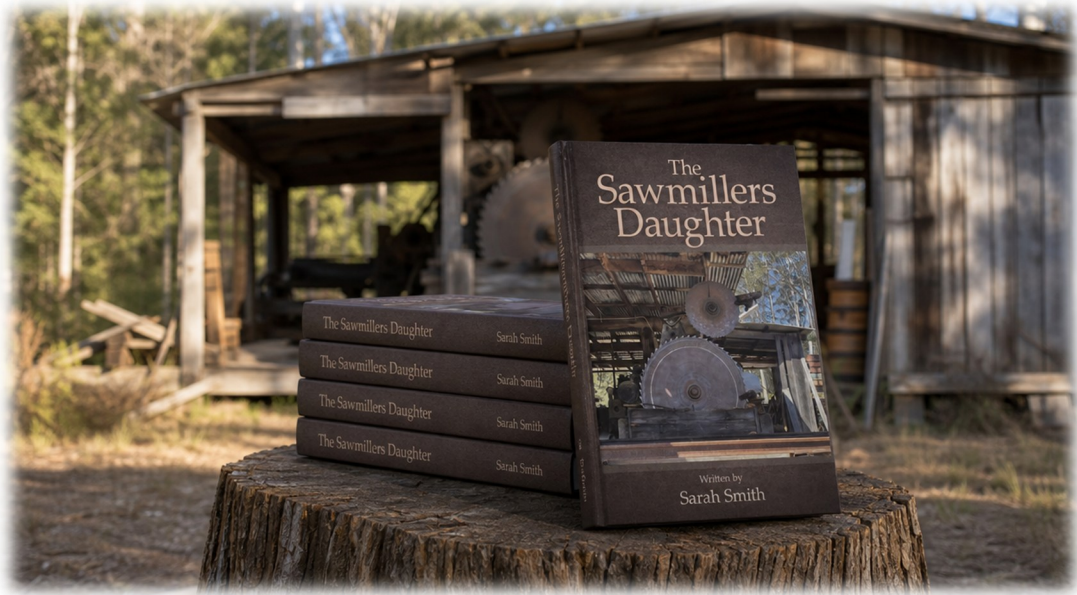
Don't delay in expressing love and gratitude. Often people's only regret is in not telling others what they mean to them. Don't wait until it's too late.

Write your friend a letter.



[Click Her Portrait to Visit Sally's Website](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)



Use Images and Videos

Posts with visuals generally receive more engagement than text-only posts. Share:

- Book cover images
- Quotes from your book
- Short video updates
- Photos of your writing process
- Reader reviews and testimonials

Simple videos recorded on a smartphone can often perform better than highly polished content because they feel authentic.

Join Relevant Facebook Groups

Facebook groups can be excellent places to find readers who are interested in your genre. Participate in discussions, answer questions, and contribute value before mentioning your book. Focus on building relationships rather than making direct sales pitches.

Always follow each group's promotional rules.

Encourage Reader Interaction

Ask questions that encourage comments and discussion. Examples include:

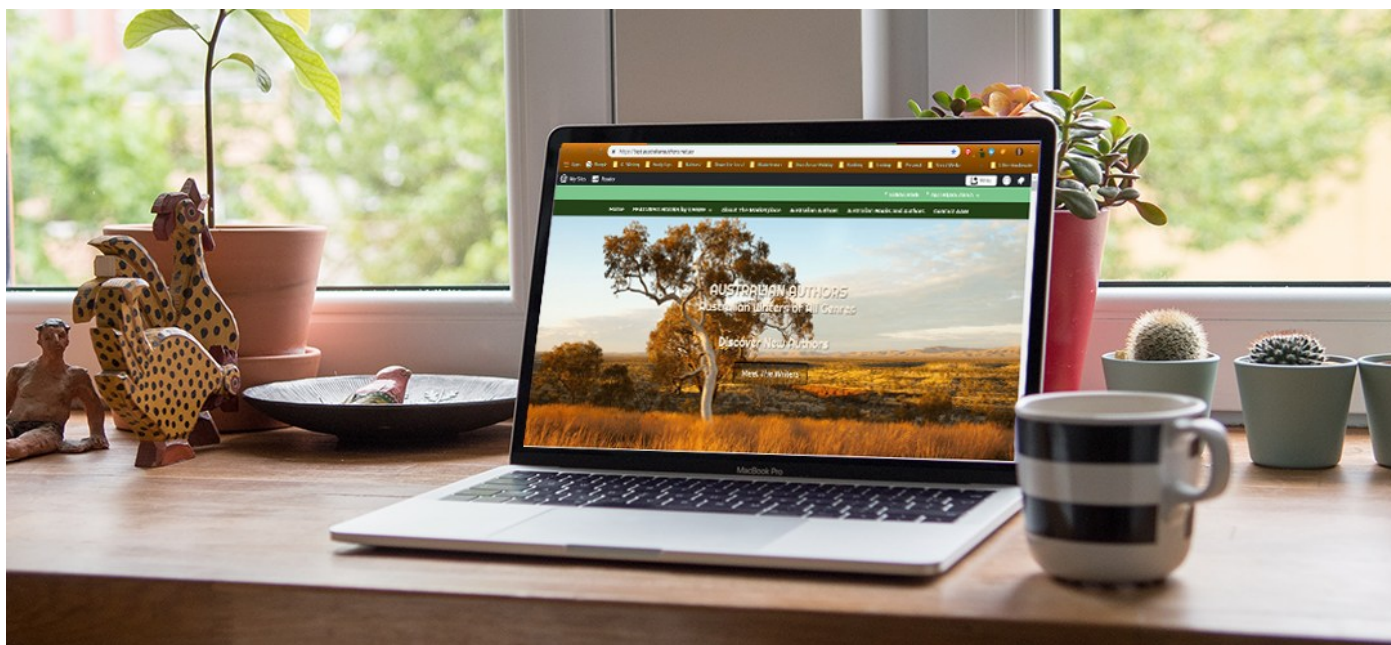
- "Who is your favourite fictional villain?"
- "What book are you currently reading?"
- "Would you rather read a mystery or a thriller?"

Higher engagement helps your posts reach more people through Facebook's algorithm.

Run Giveaways and Contests

Offering a free signed copy, ebook, or small prize can generate excitement and increase visibility. Ask participants to like, comment, or share the post to enter, while ensuring you comply with Facebook's promotion guidelines.

One method I've used is to write a short (dynamic) 'Short Read' say 2000 - 5000 words which leads into your book (a Prologue if you like) you can offer this for free, collecting an email address for the download.



Collect and Share Reviews

Positive reviews provide social proof and help potential readers feel confident about purchasing your book. Share screenshots of reader feedback and thank reviewers publicly when appropriate.

Use Facebook Events

If you are launching a new book, hosting a signing, or conducting a live Q&A session, create a Facebook event. Events make it easier to remind followers and generate interest leading up to the occasion.

Experiment with Facebook Ads

Even a small advertising budget can help reach targeted readers. Facebook allows authors to target audiences based on interests, age, location, and reading preferences. Start with a modest budget, test different ad creatives, and monitor results before increasing spending.

Stay Consistent

The most important factor in Facebook marketing is consistency. Posting regularly keeps your audience engaged and reminds readers that you are active. A simple schedule of three to five quality posts per week is often enough to maintain momentum.

Need Help?

If this all looks like too much work, taking you away from your writing, I offer a service through ['Australian Authors Marketplace'](#). I will place your book, searchable by genre, in 'Featured Books' on the website. Including at least 4 advertising posts on Facebook and Instagram per month, including relevant, quality, images and your blurb for \$15 per month (Decreasing in cost the more months you book).

Most of my clients don't do this one simple thing. When you are on promotion, you should visit the pages (Australian Authors Marketplace. Reading Australian on Facebook and Australian Authors Marketplace on Instagram) and like and share your posts. You will get increased coverage, particularly if you ask your friends and followers to do the same.

Summary.

Successful Facebook book promotion is less about aggressive selling and more about building relationships with readers. By creating engaging content, participating in relevant communities, sharing reviews, and posting consistently, authors can steadily grow their audience and increase book sales over time. The authors who succeed are usually those who show up regularly, provide value, and make genuine connections with their readers.

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

How Many Books Have You Sold?

Writing Insights By Jo Skinner



Image by [Pexels](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Life post publication can be an interesting place to be. I am often asked how my book sales are going and I know that I am not alone. It does feel like the only measure of success is how many books are sold and I understand that from a publisher's point of view, these figures are the bottom line, the thing that matters. The cold, hard reality is that very few authors sell many books, especially in Australia. When you start writing, it feels as if publication is an elusive goal, the shiny trophy at the end of years of hard work and rejection, editing, pitching, and prostrating oneself at the altar of agencies and publishing houses. The truth is that reaching this goal post brings a whole new horizon that feels further away than ever. It can be discouraging with conflicting advice about how to position your book to give it the best chance of flying off the shelves.

I have learned that as with most things, there is more than one way to define success. As authors we need to go back to the reasons we started to write in the first place. Writing and sending a book out into the world via a traditional publishing house, a smaller independent publisher or increasingly, by self-publishing is an enormous act of faith and no one knows which books will capture the public imagination and which will languish on the shelves.

There is a fascinating insight into the judgements made by publishers and how they calculate an advance based on predictions of sales success. Have a listen at [The Book Deal](#). We all know they get it wrong, with well-known and successful authors like K.J Rowling receiving numerous rejections before her extraordinary success. The Miles Franklin 2025 winner, Siang Lu with *Ghost Cities*, was rejected two hundred times but my favourite story about rejection is from crime writer Candace Fox. She has three unpublished manuscripts, hundreds of rejections and received a rejection letter several months after not only being published but winning an award for her novel, *Hades*. That would have been a sweet victory indeed.

Whether or not you are published, it is healthy to redefine what success means. A focus on book sales alone can be disheartening and discouraging. In Australia, we have a small population so selling a large volume of books is unlikely. [Grant Griffith](#) has written one of the most realistic and encouraging pieces I have read about publishing books in Australia, and I recommend you read it. The data is fascinating and includes this line. *The Australian Publisher's Association reports that the median traditionally published Aussie book sells 700-1,000 copies in its entire life. And that's with a publishing house behind it – marketing, reps, media, distribution, catalogue placement...the whole parade.*

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

My writing career is a bit like my medical career, and I suspect it is the same for many authors. A hard, consistent slog with moments of unadulterated joy. In both careers I have had opportunities to change lives, something I could only have imagined when I was in my twenties. Some of my favourite book-related moments include the following. A fellow contacted me after reading, [*The Truth about My Daughter*](#), and told me it prompted him to get a medical check for bowel cancer. It was diagnosed early and saved his life. A woman recently came to the surgery holding a copy of [*A World of Silence*](#), and said it felt like reading about her own life. We are now working together to keep her safe, to help her leave an abusive relationship. My favourite event to date was a fundraiser for [*Small Steps for Hannah*](#), organised by one of the nurses I work with. A group of artists joined me in raising funds for this important organisation. I sold the largest number of copies at a single event and the funds went towards a cause close to my heart.

I have loved doing book events and some of the best ones have only had a small number of attendees. I have reconnected with school friends I haven't seen for years, had the opportunity to run workshops about writing, imposter syndrome, writing flash fiction and domestic violence. I have cried with people who have made themselves vulnerable and told their own stories and had such heartfelt feedback about articles I write in my newsletter. And just by the way, the best part about writing a newsletter is that you don't need an agent or publisher, you can just send it straight to people's inboxes and write about the things you are passionate about. There are many ways to write and for your words to be read.

How many books have you sold is the wrong question to ask when defining success and why writers write. There is joy beyond book sales that is impossible to measure. If you want to support an author, write a review on Amazon or Goodreads, tell a friend about their books, give their books as gifts, contact the author, and give them feedback. I know my experiences in this unpredictable and at times opaque industry are not unique. I could tell one hundred uplifting stories about joyful moments since publishing my books and know it is the same for fellow authors. Don't ask them how many books they have sold, ask them to tell you stories about their life as an author, their best and worst experiences. We are writers. We love telling stories and are always happy to oblige with one or three.



Click on Jo's Portrait to discover more of her work and story.

CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Last Empty Page

Flash Fiction by Peter Carseldine

A nondescript second-hand bookshop, tucked away in a back street in the older part of town, was a haunt for readers who enjoyed combing through ancient shelves, looking at volumes that had been out of publication for decades. Towering shelves reaching toward the shadowed ceiling. Dust danced in the amber sunlight filtering through glass windows and skylights, glass stained by time. The scent of aged paper hung thick in the air as Clara wandered deeper into the labyrinth of corridors. As she strolled, she felt the uncanny weight of silence pressing against her ears, the sound of her footsteps softened by the shelves of books..

She was searching through the many shelves—though she wasn't quite sure what she was looking for. A curiosity and love of books had drawn her to this forgotten corner of town, to a library of second-hand books, said to house volumes that answered questions that nowadays, people just didn't ask. Clara's fingers wandered down each spines, the spines of the books that seemed to exude an unseen energy. Her eyes wandered down the spines until her wandering gaze stopped. There, almost beyond her reach and nestled between two large encyclopedias, with barely intelligible titles, was a slender leather-bound journal, completely out of place among the rest of the volumes.

Clara took the book down from the shelf and undid the brass clasp that secured the contents and secrets. On the first page was written, *Nunc Coepi* and in brackets, translated from the Latin, "Now I begin." Towards the bottom of the page was a quotation from Mary Shelley, "The beginning is always today."

Clara slowly turned the pages. They were yellowed, filled with elegant handwriting that seemed to whirl and dance in the dim light, as though alive. She turned them slowly, stopping now and then to read the entry, until the last page—blank and haunting—held her gaze. The air around her seemed to grow heavy, bearing down on her shoulders, as she stared at the blank page, and a whisper, faint yet insistent, brushed past her ear: "Write."

Clara took out a pen, but as her trembling fingers hovered over the page, not knowing what to write. Then words began to form beneath her pen. They weren't hers.



"Turn back before it's too late," the journal wrote to her, in script sharp and foreboding. Her heartbeat thumped, yet her hands refused to release the book, bound as if by an invisible force.

As she stared at the page, more words appeared. "Your curiosity will cost you," it warned.

As Clara's breath quickened, the journal's pages echoed with the cries of countless others who had written before her. They seemed to be warning her of some pending calamity.

The last page waited, hungry for her words.

The silence fractured, replaced by her scream. Clara could feel the journal gradually getting an uncontrolled binding about her, as if she was being sucked in between the pages.

Her scream was swallowed by the shadows of the ancient library. Beneath what was already written, her name appeared, now indelibly etched onto the last page. The journal then snapped shut—its clasp sealing tight—leaving only the eerie silence of the bookshop and all it contained.

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Perished and Forgotten

Flash Fiction by Danijela Hlis



Faces, bodies, voices, smells,
a boat full of scared and homeless refugees.
The boat is shaking in the waves, the storm is wild,
no hope is left in their eyes. They try to believe they will
be “wanted”, helped, saved. On the beaches of Italy,
France or Greece they hope to land.
Little do they know how humans have become self ob-
sessed.

Left and right people protest, “no more migrants” they
chant.

Democracies are turning into racist dark tunnels of an-
ger and hate. Compassion and empathy have no place.

Another massive wave, the boat turns on its side, some
pray, some call out to a God that stopped listening. Sea
spray mingles with their tears. A sausage of a cloud ap-
pears just as they are swallowed into the darkness. So
close to the shore, yet too late.



Sixty-two bodies recovered on the shores of Sicily. Will
anyone miss them?

Will this dramatic failure to find a safe home deter other
boats? Never. There is no choice: to die by the dictators
of the country they flee or perish in the wild sea. The sun
will rise again, in all its glory, bringing a new day, but
not for them. Around the world, people are marching and
protesting, no more migrants, no more refugees.

Have we forgotten this earth is for us all to share? Have we forgotten? The sun will raise again, but not for
them.

Danijela Hlis (June 2026)

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Hector's Story

Flash Fiction by Susan Skowronski

'That must be a very interesting book you've got there, Frank,' Linda said again.

'Umm... What did ya say?'

'I've said a lot of things, and you didn't hear a single one,' Linda chuckled. 'Whatever you're reading must be extremely interesting.'

'Sorry, Love,' Frank apologised. 'Didn't mean to ignore you. It's that book your brother gave us... Hector Ludwig's biography. Didn't he say you used to know old Hector?'

'Yes, we did. He used to call in for a yarn with Dad in the old days when he was a droving in our neck of the woods. But I can't imagine why anyone wrote a book about him. Just another man on a horse, really.'

'Says he settled out on the Dawson, and built up an outstanding herd. His breeding bulls fetched amazing prices at the Roma cattle sales.'

'That's true, but I still don't think he's worth writing about.'

'Says he imported well-bred stock...'

'Imported?' Linda laughed. 'Well, that's one way of putting it. Does it say where he imported them from?'

'Not exactly... well not so far. I haven't finished the book. Why? Where did they come from?'

'All along the track.'



Image by Samillemittell from Pixabay

'What? Do you mean ...?'

'Yep. He gathered up a few strays along the stock routes all over Queensland. I remember Dad doing a thorough head count every time old Hector came passed our place. Used to call him "Hector the Collector". I'm surprised he didn't get caught.'

'But the book says...'

'Frank, my dear,' Linda said with a smile, 'you shouldn't believe all you read, even in a biography.'

© Susan Skowronski 2026

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

WELL-BEING IN THE WILD

Flash Fiction by Susan Skowronski

Frank lay back in his camp chair and watch a pair of eagles circling high above. So effortless...gliding round and round at sunset.

Ping! Linda's phone notification for yet another text message!

'Not Laura again?' Frank moaned. 'Hasn't that woman got anything better to do?'

'She's trying to decide which holiday package would suit her best. She's planning a holistic holiday later this year, and wants to put down her deposit while there's some sort of discount...'

'What on earth is a holistic holiday? Something to do with old churches and religious sites?'

'Haha. No, a holistic experience to improve your wellbeing... You know, peace and serenity, spectacular scenery...yoga and meditations... that sort of stuff... healthy food... close to nature.'

'Umm... where's she thinking of going? We've got plenty of fresh air and nature right here... look at that koala chomping on leaves in the gum tree. There goes a mob of kangaroos...and I reckon there must be about six thousand corellas down by the lake. Then there's the butcherbird that keeps following me around, watching everything I do. Hey, she's not trying to get herself invited to come out here and join us, is she?'

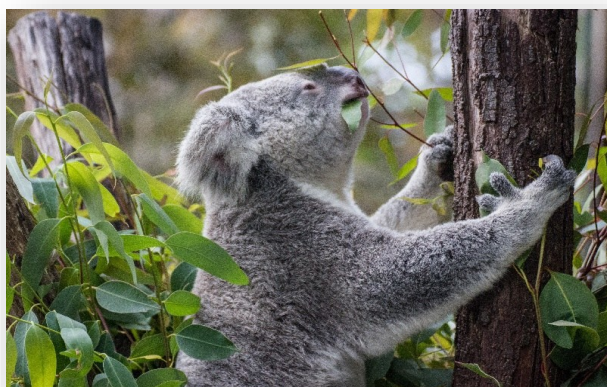


Image by [Adrian](#) from [Pixabay](#)

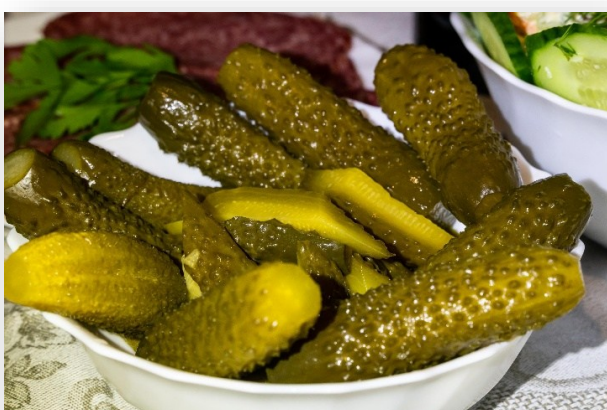


Image by [Alexei](#) from [Pixabay](#)

'No. No, she's trying to decide between a rainforest adventure in the hinterland or a vegan cruise to Alaska. Both packages have great reviews... highly recommended yoga instructors and meditations.'

'What? Wandering around in the ice sheet in a whopping big diesel-powered ship? That'd be great for the wellbeing of the planet! In the interest of the environment, maybe you'd better invite her to join us. Plenty of nature, spectacular scenery and so on. I don't know much about yoga but if she brings her own chair, she can sit out here and I'll show her how to meditate. Hehe.'

'Not good enough, Frank,' Linda laughed. 'She wants vegan food. She'd be horrified to see you chomping on cheese and biscuits. She might approve of your pickled cucumbers, but when did you ever see kabanos hanging on a tree? No, she'd want plant-based food.'

'Easily fixed. We could knock up something that might be great for her well-being. Some mushrooms over there, and I saw some pig weed down by the water we could chop up for her salad... I could even spare her a bit of grated carrot... but if she wants raw choko, she'll have to bring her own.'

© Susan Skowronski 2026

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)



Mannequins

A short Story by Peter Carseldine

The neon sign of the nightclub was a blurry memory a block behind him. Amos wasn't drunk, though the effect of the alcohol was slowing his thoughts. He felt that heavy, slow-motion plod of his feet as he walked down Ann street. He had made the decision earlier to take the bus, a responsible, if tedious, one. The night air was crisp which helped clear his head. The streetlights and shop fronts of the old Fortitude Valley district lit the pavement with a dull glow.

He reached the bus stop directly in front of McWhirters, one of the Valley's oldest department stores. Its display windows were deep, framed by dark, heavy wood that looked like it belonged in another century. Inside, three mannequins stood in a triangular formation, dressed in evening attire that looked far too expensive for this part of the city.

To comply with the latest corporate aesthetic, the trio was diverse: a tall, sharp-featured Caucasian man in a tuxedo, a pretty young Aboriginal woman in a shimmering gold gown, and a smaller, delicate Chinese figure in a silk wrap. The latter was positioned slightly forward. He found himself captivated by the porcelain complexion of the smallest figure. He leaned in to admire the uncanny craftsmanship of her skin. He was so distracted that he didn't notice the other two were no longer looking toward the street. They were peering downward; their glass eyes fixed on the rhythmic puff of his breath frosting the window pane.

A sudden chill, unrelated to the wind, spiked down his spine. He stepped back, his heels clicking on the empty pavement.

"Just the booze," he muttered, turning his back to the glass. He checked his watch. The bus was four minutes away. The street was a vacuum of silence, save for the squeaking of the loose bus stop sign swinging back and forward from a pole where it hung. The odd car passed by, but soon faded away down Ann Street.

He felt a prickle on the back of his neck, and a creeping feeling over his scalp—that specific, primal heat of being stared at. He risked a glance over his shoulder.



The frost he had left on the glass was still there, but it was being joined by three new, distinct plumes of condensation forming from inside the display. The mannequins hadn't moved their limbs, but their heads were now angled sharply, tracking him as he edged toward the street gutter, where the bus would eventually stop. The Caucasian man's neck was craned to obtain a better view of Amos; the woman in gold had tilted her head up as if catching his scent. The Asian mannequin was staring directly at him, a faint smile upon her lips

He didn't wait for the bus. He began to walk, then to jog, his heart hammering against his ribs. He reached the next corner and dared to look back.

The display window at McWhirters was empty.

Panic surged, clearing the last of the alcohol from his system. He sprinted toward the bright lights of a 24-hour McDonald's half a block away. As he burst through the swinging glass doors, the bell chimed—a cheerful, tinny sound that felt like a lifeline.

"Good evening, sir." the young woman at the front counter greeted.

"Hello," he panted, gripping the cool handle of the drink fridge door to steady his hands. "Yeah, just... missed my bus."

He ordered a black coffee and a small McDonald's apple pie, staying there for twenty minutes, taking his time to consume the food. He took out his phone and scrolled it for a couple more minutes, finally, he decided to call an taxi. He stepped back toward the front of the store to wait.

As he approached the exit, he froze. Standing just outside McDonald's plate-glass window, bathed in the harsh fluorescent light, were three figures. They were dressed in a tuxedo, a gold gown, and a silk wrap. They stood perfectly still, their diverse, beautiful faces pressed close to the glass, watching the rhythmic rise and fall of his chest through the window.

One of the male staff, who was clearing a couple of the tables, looked at Amos, his brow furrowed, "Hey, man... you know those three people outside?"

Amos didn't answer. He watched as the small Asian mannequin raised a porcelain hand and, with a slow, deliberate motion, drew a circle in the condensate of her own breath, and wiped away the condensate within the circle.

Through the cleared glass, she stared directly at him.

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

A Moment in Time

A Poem by Jo Skinner

Time stretches inside the suspended beauty of
dawn

A pause between inhalation, exhalation

Pulse contracting, dilating

The breadth and depth of possibility

magical inside the stillness

Of being

Observing.

A single spherical drop

Trembles along the vein of a leaf

Poised taut between surface tension

and gravity

A prism

refracting,

reflecting light

into rainbows

onto retinas,

translucent

in splendour

against the papery sky.

A single note

Its vibration so soft

Sound has ceased

Gaze absorbed by quivering membrane

Awe at invisible forces

Holding together

The fragile perfection

of existence

Cold air sharp on skin

Extraordinary

folded inside ordinary

The drop elongates

pauses,

suspended,

hovering,

graceful.

Molecules shift

Submit to physical laws

With perfect rotational symmetry

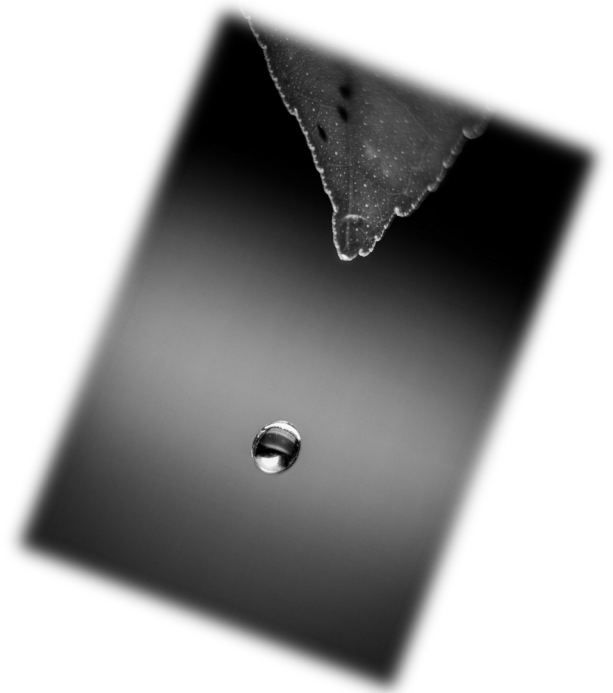
Oscillate,

fall

accelerate

And disappear into the earth

An infinitesimal cog in the natural order of
things.



[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Poetry

By Susan Showronski

Forest After Rain

Sun's rays break through the canopy
reflect from puddles
on the rain-soaked track
droplets glisten
on a spider's web

earthy smell of damp leaf-litter
mingles with the fragrance of boronia
a pardalote flits to his burrow
in a muddy bank
his clear musical calls
answered by a whip bird above

I rejoice in God's wonderful creation
strolling in the forest after rain

© Susan Skowronski 2026



Photograph by Susan Skowronski

By a Stream in Blackall

Relaxing at Blackall
camping by a stream
watching swallows swooping
dragonflies hover in the reed

I wonder if it was the same
when my mother was a child
did she sit here dreaming
on a summer afternoon?
Watch the brolgas dancing
hear the magpies' song?
Watch the golden sunset?
Hear tree frogs in the wattle
cackling in the night?

I imagine her beside me
sharing a quiet moment
relaxing by the stream

Susan Skowronski © 2026



Photograph by Susan Skowronski

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

CASH IN ADVANCE

A poem by John Nolan

Hidden in light, disguised as the night,
Voices of silence describing your plight.
Running in circles, displaying no sense,
Trapped in illusions, your own mental fence!

Awaiting some guru, to show you the way,
Without any answers, except that you pay;
Cash in advance, no, we don't take cheques,
There's no guarantee, if you don't connect!

Pictures of porcupines, dotting the sky,
Electric echidnas, who never ask why,
Thanks for the mammories, what is your name?
Emotional madness is only a game.

We play with each other, but nobody cares,
Dreams trapped in bubbles, sold as cheap wares.
Filling the warehouse with clouds of despair,
Hiding the wisdom which nobody shares!

About who you are, or who you may be,
As long as you don't, interrupt their T.V.
Sense of reality, nailed to a wall,
Of invented neuroses, ingrained through the fall.

They had long ago, before you were born,
When began Creation, the Spoken Word dawn.
Cash in advance, no, we don't take cheques,
There's no guarantee, if you don't connect!



Image by [3D Animation Production Company](#) from [Pixabay](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Poetry by Mocco Wollert

Older Poet

Somewhere in my dreams dances the young girl I
once was,
carefree, ready to write that immortal masterpiece.

Somewhere arms were ready to catch the dancer,
guide her pen over paper, drunk on a stream of
words.

Now dreams have slipped into the past, the passion
and the agonies of youth are all outside my grasp.

My pen now sings a soft and gentler song,
but I would like to dance once more in high-heel
shoes,

for I don't want to walk I want to lift my feet and
run.



Image by [StockSnap](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Old Tree

Its branches are gnarled and yet
it still brings forth blossoms so delicate,
so beautiful that all stand in admiration.

I am now like an old tree, weathered
but right in the time where I should be,
until I will go back into the ground.

But dare I imagine that sometimes
my laughter still lights the sky,
my eyes shine and all stand in awe?



Image by [Karl Egger](#) from [Pixabay](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Poetry by Mocco Wollert

New Life

The waiting is best,
knowing that life is safe,
cocooned inside.

No harsh glance or word,
blessing hands on taught skin,
imaginings, secret thoughts,
feeling life move.

All is still possible,
all is still perfect,
yes, waiting is best.



Image by [Jupi Lu](#) from [Pixabay](#)

The Magic Sword

It came out of a black-water pool
raised by an iron hand
it was needed to put wrong to right
throughout the ancient land.
Forged at night, honed at noon
it lay dormant wrapped in sleep,
till its mighty force became awake
and made the devil weep.



Image by [Eliabner Cibene](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Ode to a cleaner

A Poem by Mocco Wollert

There is no special look,
just an unnoticed, small woman.
Her arms carry loads too heavy,
her back is bent, fingers gnarled
but her smile is always at the ready.

Largely ignored
by crowds in coffee places,
by folk who do not see beyond
the logo blouse tucked into regulation slacks,
who walk around her cart of sorrow,
without a second look.

A small-time hero
who fights dirt and grime each day,
walking a million steps from shop to shop,
greeting those who acknowledge her.
She works for small pay, a human pit pony
faithfully making her rounds.



Image by [LATUPEIRISSA](#) from [Pixabay](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

There's No Place Like a Horse

A Poem by Sally Eberhardt

When the world around you spins too fast,
When troubles weigh heavy on shoulders
and heart,
When your future is lost to pain from your
past,
There's no place like a horse.

When calm eludes you and peace is but a
dream,
When frustration and confusion make you
want to scream,
Come, relax, breathe, for their presence is
serene.
There's no place like a horse.

When grief and loss feel like all you know,
When you need to escape and forget your
woes,
With a horse is where your healing flows.
There's no place like a horse.

Through a horse's eyes, you see good in
yourself,
Connecting with you as you are, is how they
help,
Their unconditional love lifts your mental
health.
That's why there's no place like a horse.



Sally and her beloved mare, Cherry.



Cherry

[CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

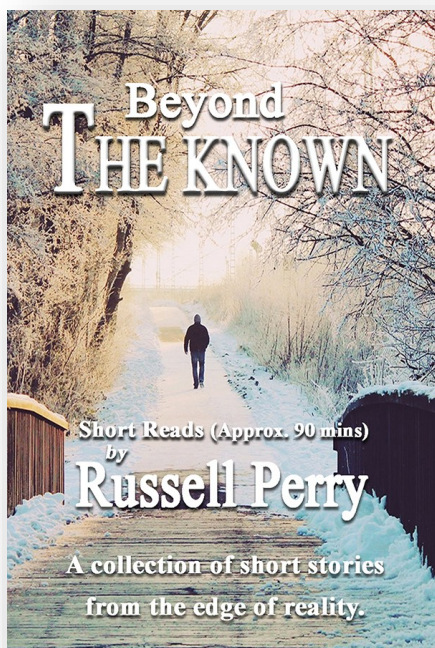
Members' Book Promotions

To have your book promoted here:

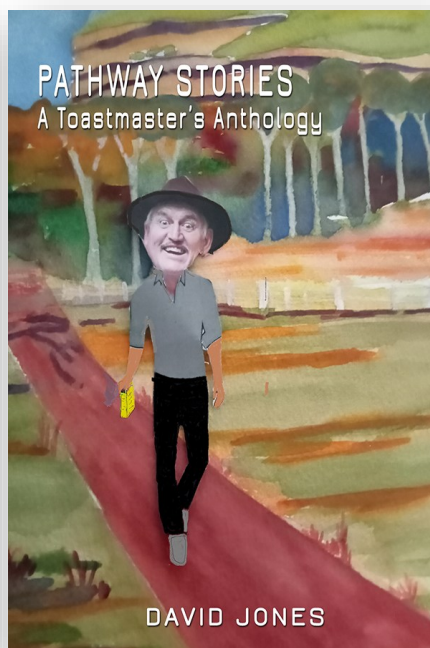
- You must be a paid up member of FAWQ
- You must have your profile on the FAWQ website including your book cover image and purchase link.

You must submit your promotion request with your name and your book title to editor@fawq.com.au

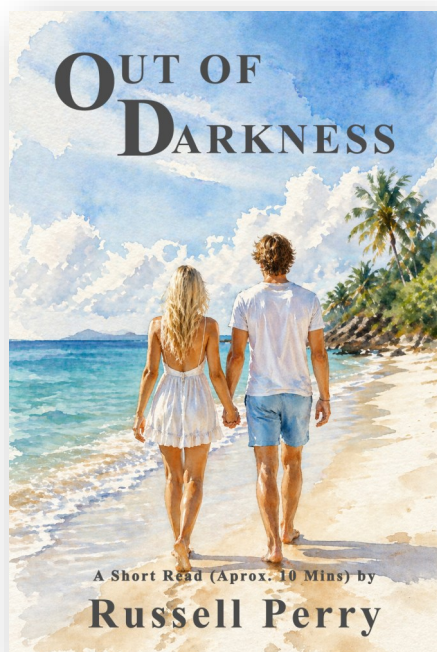
Metaphysical Fiction



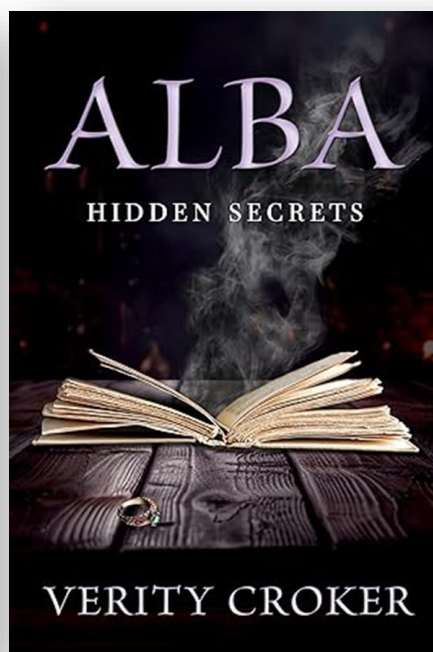
Short Stories—Anthology



Short Read Metaphysical



Young Adult Fiction



Click your Library

**Brisbane
City
Council
Libraries**



Marketing Opportunity

CLICK TO REGISTER YOUR PROFILE
ON AUSTRALIAN AUTHORS MARKETPLACE
ITS FREE



AUSTRALIAN AUTHORS

**CLICK HERE FOR
TABLE OF CONTENTS**