

Media Release

March 30, 2012

Poetry Abounds

The 2012 Gloucester Writers Festival May 4-6 at Gloucester High School this year has much on offer for the poets amongst us.

From 1pm to 4pm on Friday May 4 a workshop for poets is being conducted by Judy Johnson. Judy is a poet and novelist who has been writing and teaching poetry through university and elsewhere for twenty years. Her first collection *Wing Corrections* came second in the Anne Elder Award and was reprinted. Her second *Nomadic* won the Melbourne University Wesley Michel Wright Prize, and her third book, a verse novel *Jack* won the Victorian Premier's Award for poetry and was subsequently reprinted by Picador. Individual poems have won many prizes including the Josephine Ulrick, Val Vallis, Patricia Hackett, Bruce Dawe, John Shaw Neilson, Banjo Paterson, Tom Collins and Newcastle Poetry Prize.

In this three hour workshop for poets attendees will learn how to avoid the pitfalls and the same time utilise techniques of poetic craft to bring their work to its full potential on the page. Participants are to bring a pen and paper for a writing exercise or two, and if people wish to have a one page workshopped, please bring enough copies for the group.

Judy has judged many awards including the New South Wales Premier's Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry, the Tom Collins, Henry Kendall, Roland Robinson and Newcastle Poetry Prizes.

There is more for poetry lovers.

On Saturday May 5 at 5pm after the last panel session and readings from the secondary schools competition there will be the popular "Poet's Sprint". This is free for day or weekend pass holders and \$5 for others. No need to go anywhere as it will be held at the Gloucester High School, with beverages available for purchase. Prizes will be awarded to the most popular poems presented.

The Sunday May 6 programme includes a panel session at 1pm on "Who Reads Poetry anyway?" with Robert Adamson and Judy Johnson. Many claim that writing, and reading, poetry are lost arts. Schools do not encourage pupils to learn poetry by heart, so how do we develop an appreciation of poetry when we are not introduced to it in our youth. In the last few months several anthologies of Australian poetry have been published – and sold. Who is buying books of poetry? How do you write a poem? Where does the inspiration come from? What distinguishes good poetry from bad? Hear what poets have to say about their chosen literary form.

Robert Adamson's collection, *The Clean Dark* won both the Victorian and NSW Premiers' prizes as well as Australia's National Book Council 'Banjo' Award. It was the first time all three major prizes went to the same book. This was followed by *Waving to Hart Crane* in 1994 which was shortlisted for the Kenneth Slessor Award for Poetry and the Australian Literary Gold Medal, University of NSW. In 1995 Adamson was awarded the FWA's Christopher Brennan Award for a lifetime's achievement in poetry.

Mulberry Leaves, New & Selected Poems 1970-2001 was published in 2001 by Paper Bark Press. This is 18th book brought together the best of his poetry from 1970 to 2001. With a career spanning three decades, Adamson's work in *Mulberry Leaves* bears out Dorothy Hewett's observation that 'with each book his maturity and control increases'. This rich but discriminating selection consolidated his claim to being 'the most unique poet of his generation' and a 'key figure' according to the *Times Literary Supplement*.

The Gloucester Writers Festival website www.gloucesterwritersfestival.com has details of the full programme, guest writers, workshops, Poets Sprint, Barbecue, Dinner and much more. Tickets can be purchased online, by phone, by mail or in person with a 10% early bird discount for day and weekend pass bookings received by April 14.

Enquiries to 6558 1208 or email info@gloucesterbookshop.com.au