

An abstract painting with a complex, layered texture. The color palette is dominated by deep blues, vibrant oranges, and dark blacks, with some lighter, almost white, areas. The brushstrokes are varied, ranging from fine, delicate lines to thick, impasto applications. The overall effect is one of intense energy and emotional depth, with a sense of movement and depth that draws the viewer's eye across the canvas.

Don't Rhyme My Feelings

Shire of Dardanup Library Poetry Chapbook 2023

Edited by Andrew James Macleod

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A note from the CEO

This chapbook was produced through one of our wonderful Shire of Dardanup community programs.



André Schönfeldt
Chief Executive Officer

The Shire of Dardanup places a high value on our culture, art and programs that acknowledges the importance of these elements in creating a vibrant, unique and inclusive community.

I hope you enjoy our first community poetry chapbook.



Editor's foreword

*Welcome to **Don't Rhyme My Feelings**, a poetry chapbook created from a workshop I conducted at the Eaton Community Library in June 2023. The workshop introduced and explored four poetic forms: tanka, spoken word, blackout, and free-verse poetry. In the workshop participants were challenged to craft non-rhyming poems around the theme of feelings, resulting in a diverse collection that encapsulates love, loss, and more.*

The poetry in this chapbook reflects the talent and dedication of the workshop participants. It serves as a mirror to our community, capturing the daily emotions that shape our lives. These verses are not just individual expressions; they are a shared experience, reminding us of our collective humanity.

As you read and reflect on these poems you'll discover the profound in the everyday, a reminder of the depth within our shared human experience. Embrace this emotional journey, and may these verses resonate with some of your own feelings, reaffirming the beauty and complexity of life. Please enjoy.

Andrew James Macleod

Debbie Casey

Fire

A small flicker
Orange flames quickly erupting
Igniting all surroundings
Fierce flames crackling
Jumping higher and higher
Devouring everything in its path
Wildly dancing
Feeding, licking, attacking
Intent on demolition
Showing no fear
Pillaging everything
Wailing sirens
Red screaming fire engines
Orange coated firemen
Attacking with powerful hoses
Helicopters dropping water
Trying to control
This all-consuming monster
Responsible for charred remains
Blackened burnt out houses and land
Smoke filled skies
Causing breathing difficulties
Desolation death and destruction
Providing determination
To beat this scourge
Humans unified to rebuild
Replace ash and charcoal
With life once more

*





Meta

Tanka, a poem
With a structure consisting
Of five-seven-five
Seven-seven, with a twist
Somewhere about the middle

*

White

Merlot wine bottle
White tablecloth, white patrons
White everything
White noise, white elephant,
white
Whales, white politics, white out

*

Allure

Baited hooks beckon
Enticing: take me, taste me
Takes your breath away
Smooth screeches, sirens preach,
sing
Puffs of poison, foggy grief

*

Dominic

My brother-in-law!
As toast to expectancy!
Except the next hour
Expect the unexpected
Lights, metal, came too quick to see

Expectant uncle
A premier life event
The next thing we knew
No time to repent, regret
Misstep, struck down in our prime

*

Damien Shields

Golden Teachings

Fungal spores adhere
Medium: sanctuary
Umbrellas blooming
Alien fruits, dark rewards
Only the brave can conquer

*

Stormchestra

Tin roof percussion
Ice drumsticks beat metal snares
Dawn's break brings reprieve
The slow roll of calming skies
Birds celebrate with chorus

*

Rabbit

Manic white lights glow
Seas of fast-moving vessels
Rumble underfoot
The commuters aim their cars
In the direction of home

*

Stumble

The clay crumbled down
Footholds sagging under weight
Swift hands stop the fall
Like catching falling feathers
Or snowflakes on outstretched
tongues

*



Untitled

Seasons change quickly
Day's taut woven tapestries
Fray, unravelling
Free-form threads rework their art
Behold their new masterpiece

*

Forwards

The older I get
The less f**ks I have to give
I've less years to give
But I assure you, those years
Shall be getting ev'rything

*



Pam Vercoe

Label me

Resisted labels so long
not shy, not depressed, not anxious
Yet when I found a label for him
I pinned it on

Not abused but stressed
Not the traumatised child but
the independent woman

Yet when I found the label for him
that made it all fall into place
I knew

*

Steve Heron

Big Bang

At first
Once void
Nothing
Nil, vacant
Zilch, zero, zip
A deep, despairing dark
Absence of absolutely everything
Except
Something
Something so subtle
Something so simple
Something so singular
Something so perfectly potent
That unexpected presence
Disturbed the nonchalant nothing
And the void exploded
Becoming everything

*



Debbie Casey

Tranquillity

Blue shimmering seas
Glittering endlessly to the horizon
From crested waves
Dancing onto the shore
Playfully covering toes
Then slowly ebbing away
Gulls flying lazily
Alert, foraging for food
Lovers strolling aimlessly
Across the sun-drenched sand
White sparkling grains
Providing happiness
For sun-protected youngsters
As they build sandcastles
I sit on my outstretched rock
Under a blue cloudless sky
Feeling the fresh breeze
Whistling through the trees
Observing the scene before me
At last I have found peace
On this beautiful beach

*



Pam Vercoe

A moment in time

I've forgotten what it feels like to dance in the rain
but you remind me
I've forgotten what it feels like to jump in puddles
face raised to the sky
but you remind me
I've forgotten the joy of fresh discovery and wild adventures
but you remind me

And now I know why the sky is blue
that darkness holds no fear
That time lasts forever
as its loops upon itself
And yet passes in a flash
as a burning star across the sky

My lover - bright moments when heaven exploded
My child - bright moments when shoes forgotten jumps into that puddle
Moments dropped into water
ripples across my life

I know where joy lives
I know why the sky is blue

*





Debbie Casey

Crossroads

Here I stand on the verge of life
Wracked by memories, decisions, knowledge
Influences from others
My mind is swirling, actions pushing me toward the edge
An inability to comprehend worldly happenings
I tentatively step forward to continue my journey
But I hesitate, recalling past and present events
I look around me to choose which path to follow
Uncertainty flickers before my eyes, fear courses through my veins
I shake, I tremble, I stop, decide
Determined I take a step forward
Leaving the past and present behind
Leaving the crossroads and step into the path of life.

*

Pam Vercoe

Lost love

Felt the sun upon my face
Felt the whisper of the breeze
The stirring of the leaves
Felt longing for what was lost

The love, the hope, the dream

Felt happiness stir, grief finally worked through
The acceptance of the loss
And the sun upon my face

*





Debbie Casey

Happiness

Skipping through the grass
Happy friendly faces smile
Lips part but I think
I reflect on happy times
Life is a wonderful thing

*

My Best Friend

Eyes slowly close shut
Faint tail wagging,
last breath comes
Lying still at peace
Tears stream down my upset face
I farewell my lovely dog

*

Winter

Icy winds swirling
Teeth chattering as I freeze
Clouds part as sun shines
Heaters low, winter recedes
As this time slowly passes

*

Maureen Smith

The darkened sky

Clouds gather at whim
Thunder deafening the mind
No one dares to speak
Hurry home through rumbles
Lightning rules the darkened sky

*

My mind is buzzing

Listening to a poetic lecturer
Lost in the confusion of it all,
I smile
hungry, opening my mind
enabling words to flow
My mind is buzzing
Emotions evolve
Oh, how I long for the happening
of it all

*





Steve Heron

Broken

Everything is broken
Nothing remains new
longer than
a minuscule moment

The finest wine
longs to be tasted
But first the seal
needs to be broken

Everything is broken
Nothing escapes
the inevitable plight
of ageing or degeneration

A dormant seed
with so much potential
cannot germinate
until its sheath is broken

Everything is broken
Nothing defines
the fragile world
more than brokenness

A simple cell
cannot multiply
until it divides
by breaking into two

Everything is broken
Nothing matches
the bleak beauty
that comes from brokenness

A newborn baby
has their first taste of freedom
when their umbilical cord
is broken

An eggshell
cannot reveal
its inner new life
until it is broken

Everything is broken

A gift concealing its essence
is not fully appreciated
Until its wrapping
is broken

Only through brokenness
Can new possibilities emerge
Reimagined, recreated,
transformed
to fulfil a magnificent destiny

Rob Manning

Palliative Care

It comes like a sentence
Handed down from someone
 higher up
Then delivered by the intern still learning
 his trade in life and death.
 ‘We’re suggesting palliative care.’
 The softness of the word
 The falling intonation, like hope
Falling softly through your fingers
Leaving only time, that now you measure carefully
 in days or hours.

And so here we are on this last day
 This final day of
 palliative care
And I arrive after the 200 k drive, too late or too early
 The thought still haunts
And there she is curled up, a tiny bird lost in the white expanse of the
 bed
 Insignificant now
Morphine drips its palliative way through her but even at 95
 she is still fighting, tossing, and turning
 Calling out like she’s having an argument:

 ‘Put your washing away, make your bed, tidy your room’
 And still she fights against that coming moment
 The final moment on this last day

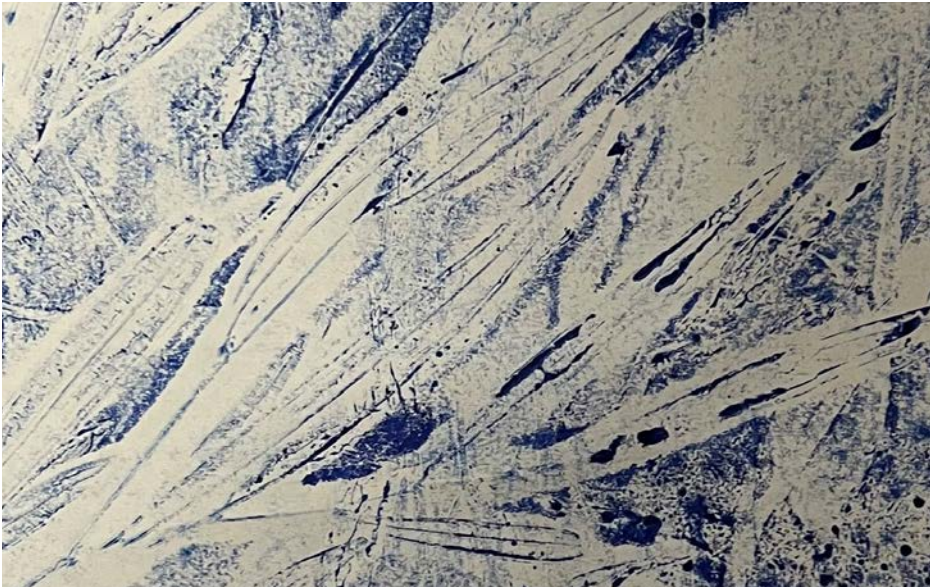
 I answer her calls
‘It’s okay Peg, we’re all here, we love you, we will be fine. Go when you
 are ready’
And so it goes all day till sunset while people come and go

Come and go until it's just Diana and me watching now
as the breathing starts to race
The heart in that tiny bone cage beats wildly, still fighting
the last moments of this day
Until that final breath
And all those years close in one last slow exhale

The sun has gone down in the West
Out the window
Freshwater Bay is all gold light
The river shimmers
A boat pulls gently on its mooring.

(In memory of my Mum, Peg Manning, 1925-2020)

*



Steve Heron

Six Sensational Senses

Sparkling sequins shining in the spotlight
Soaking in spectacularly scenic sights
Scattered shimmering stars
Stormy skies

Soothing sounds of summer streams
Surf splashing and smashing on the shore
Scary screeches, sharp and sudden
Soft squeaks

Sniffing soft scents of springtime
Subtle sweetness of strawberry
Stinky smells and stale stench
Strong, sharp

Stroking smooth shapes, scraping scales
Striking, smacking, slithery, and slimy
Squishy, sticky, and squeezy
Scratching stings

Savouring seasoned spicy sauces
Swallowing satisfying sausages
Slurping scrumptious soups
Salty, sweet, sour

Seeking solace and serenity
Sustaining second sight
Simple, soulful singing
Sacred spirit

*



Steve Heron

Scarlet Robin

A cheerful cheepy chirp
A tell-tale flutter
Amongst the greens
yellows and oranges
A flash of bright red
Catches my eye
There you are
Perched on a branch
For a bird's eye view
Scanning for insects
Diving down
for a tasty morsel
Fluttering back
to the branch
Your tiny body
Turns to face me
A stunning splash
of scarlet
A bold blush
Against a wispy
green background
I treasure the magnificence
of the moment

*





Maureen Smith

All is calm

Embers bright the toasty fire
Warmth spreads throughout the room
Chilly air succumbs to its surroundings
The season of winter has arrived
Ruffled birds shelter amongst water laden trees
The heat seeking cat huddles close
Only the crackling sparks amongst gentle flames challenge the silence
All is calm

*

Kiss my mind

Rolling in, smashing aground
Surrounding intensity
Floating with the tide
Waiting to be moved
Balancing calming
Cooling waves wrap around warm sunbeams, kiss my mind
Water swirls forcing my body to rush then glide ever consuming
Intensity

*

Seek another stage

When joy becomes a chore
Review the stage on which you stand
Lights out
Time to seek another stage
You the author strategic, in command
A new script able to be written

*

Pam Vercoe

The Long Summer

You know those lazy summer days
those long days that stretch forever
those summer sounds of cricket, laugh and stream

You know those summer days
the sense of time suspended
the long gaze of lover
the pop as the iris expands, and the heart explodes

You know those long, languorous, love- soaked days
They last forever
but never long enough

*





Rob Manning

Silhouette

Sometimes, on a moonless night, with stars scattered carelessly like
crumbs
and a warm earthy scent thick in the air
you look up.

See the 200 year old Marri tree silhouetted against the universe.
Branches, trunk, and leaves sitting there in their smudgy outline
Out on the edge
of infinity.

Climb up the knotty limb. Stand with your arms outstretched.
Jump into space and tumble
back to where it all began.
Or maybe just to a star close by.
Those scattered crumbs that are really nothing
at all.

Pam Vercoe

Joy becomes a chore

Over coffee she said to me
“When joy becomes a chore”
it’s time to leave
And moments of joy held precious unravelled before my eyes

Made me mourn for the lost joy
Now love’s becomes a chore
My poem mocked
And love, like poem scorned

The deep, unexpressed passion ever moderated
Unexpressed it must remain
beneath a mask of calm acceptance
Made profane
and thrust upon him unwilling

The passion – the crash against the shore
No more
Because, he says,
the joy is now a chore

*

We extend our gratitude to the community members who have generously shared the artwork featured in this chapbook. These exceptional contributions took shape during the Art Workshop held at the Shire of Dardanup and guided by the talented Emily Jackson.

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