

## FOREWORD

We met while attending a U3A group on Poetry Appreciation. Since some of us also wrote poetry we felt it would be stimulating to meet separately and form a women only poetry writing workshop while continuing in the reading group.

Janne offered her home as a regular meeting spot and during 2016 we began gathering once or twice a month on the off weeks from the reading group. We later settled for once a month for two hours. Of course, there was always a break for tea, coffee and general chit-chat.

The usual format was for each member to bring copies of her poems to distribute on the day. The writer would then read her poem and others would ask questions and make constructive suggestions. From time to time one or other member would suggest a form or topic of interest, or a theme would arise out of our more general discussions.

Two of the members had already published but the less confident were encouraged to submit work for publication. A sign of a poem finalised to the satisfaction of the writer, and the group, was that it would go “into the drawer”. If all else failed, we would put together the chosen work ourselves.

While we have found places for some work in online (particularly tanka) journals and in other collections, there remain a lot of interesting pieces that will not see the light unless we share them ourselves. So we have taken some out of the drawer.

*The Moorings* is a nod to the address at which we meet; a workshop collection is a way we can share. We offer an eclectic mix of forms and themes which five women have produced each in her own style.

– Janne D Graham  
Convenor

## A Poetic Presence

Matilda, a rescue cat, attended most of the workshop meetings. Resenting her chairs being taken by visitors she had a tendency to climb up behind them and stretch out, in various poses, on the backs of the couches. It was also a technique for keeping out of the dog's way. As she aged, suffering from kidney disease, she was more inclined to sit in front of the group staring into space.

When she died Neva wrote this poem and sent it to Janne with one of her many photos of the cat outstretched.

The group felt that she deserved a place in the collection.

## Poetry Cat

Janne's tabby cat sat not on the mat  
She preferred the top of the sofa back

She purred now and then, not often, though –  
a brindled enigma, this cat in the know.

Sometimes I'd catch her watching us  
her eyes open thin, with a look just

this side of smugness. Call that poetry?  
Those marks on the page? Without trying

*I could show you that the real poem is a body curled into herself then  
stretched out then curled in then arched high as the sky then curled  
in and the sun on soft fur and a purr and a hiss and a shiver as the  
shadow of the tenth life draws near*

*but I won't*

She yawns with a smile, I think it's a smile  
Our sweet poetry cat. Was it a smile?

– Neva Kastelic



# EXPERIMENTING WITH FORM

## EKPHRASTIC

Ekphrastic poems derive their inspiration from the arts. They often constitute a vivid description of an artwork or a re-interpretation of the original work. Here we also include poems that have linked an artwork to an idea or a scene.

## Kusama Landscape

I walk into the 70s  
into a Kusama landscape  
her mind apart blows mine apart.  
I appear, disappear, merge, submerge  
rise, fall.  
fall  
fall  
fall  
effing pumpkins to infinity Batman!  
her 70s orange stains the passage of 40 years  
slip sliding away – my destination myth  
left standing at the station  
*la salle des pas perdus*  
my lost footsteps left no footprints  
in my green hand knitted jumper  
running my hand over a lime green kitchen bench  
appearing disappearing  
mind games forever  
(quite rightly)  
scared girl in a yellow submarine  
not waving.  
dot dot dot dash dash dash dot dot dot

40 years, Odysseus! You call yourself lost  
and a long time from home?  
Meanwhile, I unravel Kusama's delusion of a jumper.

in response to the installation at the National Gallery of Australia – *The Spirits of the Pumpkins Descending into the Heavens* (Yayoi Kusama)

– Neva Kastelic

## The Watchers

1.

At his home in Ekely  
Munch stands rigid  
between the long clock  
and the spartan bed  
(the horizontal and the vertical).  
Behind, his paintings hazy,  
hang haphazardly.  
His body the midnight hand  
missing from the faceless clock  
waiting for the inevitable strike.

2.

Larkin stands by his Hull high window  
in the sleepless, restless hours gazing  
through small, thick spectacles into the dark  
and sees *what is always there ...*  
then watches until the pre-dawn light spreads  
knowing the world will come alive again.

in response to: 1. Munch, Edvard: *Self portrait*, 1940-43, oil on canvas; 2. Larkin,  
Phillip: *Aubade*, 1977

– Janne D Graham

## Wrestling

a rough night we had of it  
i stand still: her beefy arms  
hold supporting  
my heavy head  
I am defeated  
but not overcome  
backbone is true

struggle in stone  
angel and i are one  
from an alabaster block  
joined at the hip

my back, buttock, thigh and calf  
moulded in rhythmic form

in this embrace of opposites

we cling battle scarred

soul fought flesh

and now

finds

Breath

in response to *Jacob and the Angel*, Sir Joseph Epstein, 1940

– Meryl Turner

## Focus On The Fan

The table –

a still life: wine glass and bottle; bowl  
of indeterminate contents; napkin already abandoned;  
account thrown carelessly before the patron;  
globules of food awaiting the thrall of avarice.

focus on the fan

The man –

at the table behind, lightly drawn, only wine left,  
looks inwards to a near empty life;  
gaze just short of the corpulence before him;  
furrowed brow, has she just farted?

focus on the fan

The woman –

centre stage: lank unkempt hair, elongated face;  
head vulture-like settled into the mountainous frame;  
ham-bone arms reach out of voluminous sleeves;  
pudgy fingers furiously fork the face with food.

focus on the fan

indolently stirring  
the air against the sweat  
of consumption.

in response to *The Ogress* by Peggy Bacon

– Janne D Graham