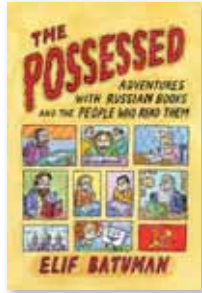


June 2010

1. Text Publishing books we love
2. Original fiction by Trent Jamieson and Laura Middlebrook
3. Writing tips from Avid Reader authors
4. Special readers review of *Traitor* by Stephen Daisley
5. Anna recommends Young Adult books



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The Possessed

Elif Batuman \$26.95 PB

The Possessed draws on Elif Batuman's articles in the *New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *n+1* to tell the true story of one woman's intellectual and sentimental education and her many strange encounters with scholars devoted to classic Russian writers.

In a series of intertwined essays about her life—and other people's lives—in the world of Russian literature and scholarship, Batuman has written a funny, smart and self-deprecating book about Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov, and the academics who worship them. It is full of stories of ice palaces and giant apes, conference disasters and excursions into Uzbek poetry; but there is also wisdom, and deep appreciation of the great Russian novels.

Hilarious, wide-ranging, erudite, and, memorable, The Possessed is a sui generis feast for the mind and the fancy.

— *New York Times Book Review*



Gunshot Road

Adrian Hyland, \$32.95 PB

Emily Tempest is small, black, as snaky as a taipan's tooth and is the woman least likely ever to embark on a career in policing. But her old mate Superintendent Tom MacGillivray has persuaded her to sign on as the Aboriginal Community Police Officer for the Outback (not to mention throwback) township of Bluebush.

In *Gunshot Road* Adrian Hyland takes us to the outback—a place we think we know, and have mostly never seen. Introducing us to the people who belong there—a different people, as wise, foolish and fallible as the rest of us. And spinning for us a veil of wit and lyrical beauty through which we can see them truly.



Pretty Monsters

Kelly Link \$19.95 PB

The companion volume to the surreal collection *The Wrong Grave*.

Weird, wicked, spooky and delightful, *Pretty Monsters* is a book of tall tales to keep you up all night. Blending fairytale, fantasy, horror, myth and mischief in a delicious cocktail, Kelly Link creates a world like no other, where bloodsucking ghosts are not greedy and where a boy is kidnapped by his father to wait for the aliens to return and we encounter a people-eating monster who claims to have a sense of humour.

Combining the imaginative brilliance of Jorge Luis Borges with the madcap escapades of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and more than a pinch of macabre humour, this is writing to come back from the dead for.

DVDs and CDs



The Gin Club—

Deathwish RRP: \$24.95 CD
Avid Price During June: \$22.45

Over the past five years, Brisbane's The Gin Club have established themselves as one of Australia's most exciting bands, both through their studio albums as well as their inimitable live performances. Continually evolving from the traditional folk/country of their self-titled debut, The Gin Club's seven-person songwriting roster has developed a unique and distinctive style. *Deathwish* is The Gin Club's fourth album, and features guest contributions by Mick Thomas (Weddings Parties Anything) and Megan Washington.

Italian Food Safari

RRP: \$29.95 DVD
Avid Price During June: \$26.95

Italian Food Safari is the much-awaited next feast in the beautiful Food Safari series, a celebration of the incredible breadth and hard work of the Italians who came and settled in Australia over a generation ago and have kept their food traditions intact. Mercifully, they've shared their food and culture with the rest of us and we've been delighted to embrace everything from classic dishes to the most rustic home-style food.

Our Favourite Text Publishing Books



TEXT PUBLISHING

1. *Affection* by Krissy Kneen
2. *The Ice Age* by Kirsten Reed
3. *This Is How* by M J Hyland
4. *Eucalyptus* by Murray Bail
5. *Dreams from My Father* by Barack Obama
6. *The Griffith Review Journal*
7. *Both Ways Is The Only Way I Want It* by Maile Meloy
8. *Ham On Rye* by Charles Bukowski
9. *Let The Right One In* by John Ajvide Lindqvist
10. *Dark Places* by Kate Grenville
11. *I'm Not Scared* by Nicolo Ammaniti
12. *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martell
13. *The Broken Shore* by Peter Temple
14. *In My Skin* by Kate Holden
15. *Mr Pip* by Lloyd Jones
16. *The Woman in Black* by Madeleine St John
17. *The Billionaire's Curse* by Richard Newsome
18. *Between the Monster and the Saint* by Richard Holloway
19. *Romulus My Father* by Raymond Gaita



Trent Jamieson



Anna Hood



Christopher Currie



Kasia Janczewski

Kraken

China Mieville
\$34.99 PB

China Mieville's *The City and the City*, published last year, has won or been up for every major SF award of 2010. Expect *Kraken* to do the same.

Kraken is about the end of the world, or what happens when various "ends of the world" vie for dominance. It's dark, packed with more ideas per page than most fantasy novels contain within five hundred, and, surprisingly, very funny.

When a giant squid is nicked from the Natural History Museum, Billy the curator that preserved the squid, is dragged into a magical Underworld London. There's monsters and mobsters galore, not to mention malevolent origami (no really), and Billy is immediately completely out of his depth.

Think HP Lovecraft's *Cthulhu Mythos* combined with *Eastern Promises* and *Harry Potter*, and you're part way there, though this book is pure Mieville: dense, electrifying and (perhaps what *The City and the City* lacked) fast-paced.

Corruption, cults, cops, curators and calamari in the city. This is the end of the world novel to end all end of the world novels. If you've not read Mieville's work before, *Kraken* is a fabulous place to start. Dip a toe in the water and mind the tentacles.

Anthropology of an American girl: *A novel*

Hilary Thayer Hamann
\$33.00 PB

This novel had a small print run when it was self-published in 2003. Now, the combined powers of word of mouth and a copy falling into the right hands sees a book that could have been missed by the literary world and forgotten entirely, will be available for us in Australia to read as of August 2010. And thank God. *Anthropology Of An American Girl: A Novel* is more than just a coming of age story about one girl spanning the complex decades of the 70s and 80s. As the title suggests it delves deep into what it means to be female. Eveline has grown up with the fading hippy ideals of her parents juxtaposing the excesses of the time and we see the conflicts and dilemmas of her gender play out in not only her life but also the lives of the women around her. How can we live basically and stay true to ourselves when society imposes and advocates the opposite? Hilary Thayer Harmann has an amazingly keen eye for observation and the story is told in excruciating detail with just enough dry wit to soften the edges. Complex and provocative, this really is a book that needs time to digest. Yet I found the beautifully crafted prose and engaging narrative an absolute pleasure to read and I hardly felt the 600 pages. It is now my favourite book for 2010. An absolute gem.

At Home

Bill Bryson
Special price \$45 HB

This is just about the best nonfiction book I've ever read. Which, to be honest, is no less than you expect from a writer like Bill Bryson. Long before 'Freakonomics and Tipping Points', Bryson was enlightening our minds with readable yet extraordinary elements of history. *At Home* is no exception. Bryson uses his own home, a converted Rectory in Norfolk, England, as a springboard for the remarkable history of human domestic progress, or, as he refers to it, the story of humans "getting comfortable, slowly."

Far removed from the usual signposts of a "history" book—wars, empires and death—Bryson's relentlessly compelling narrative nonetheless contains them, but only as examples of how tiny changes to domestic life can result in the largest and most famous of consequences.

After reading this book, I promise you will never look at your home the same way again. This is a wonderful book that demonstrates with great skill the capacity for humans to innovate, invent and subvert knowledge in order to keep a roof over our heads, and to provide us, as a result, with some of our most amazing successes. Thoroughly recommended.

Light Boxes

Shane Jones \$19.95 PB

February has forsaken all the creatures and things that fly – the sky is empty and the world is frozen by an enduring and melancholic Winter. February is stealing the children and he is very, very sad. War has been declared on February by The Solution, a group of former hot-air balloonists and they have rallied the people including Thaddeus and Selah who have lost their daughter Bianca to this cruel, cold entity.

Welcome to this lyrical, dark world and its haunting story painted by Shane Jones. This little, beautiful and memorable book makes you believe the unbelievable and yearn for the sunshine that its characters are fighting for. Its story unfolds with an unusual but engaging structure of sections written from the perspectives of its different counterparts, including the broken and vengeful February and his concerned partner, known as "the girl who smelled of honey and smoke".

This work of brilliant imagination is for those that like a poetic and surreal twist on reality. Admirers of Haruki Murakami and Jonathan Safran Foer will be delighted as they take the strange and wonderful plunge into this story. The film rights have already been bought by *Where the Wild Things Are* director, Spike Jones so be prepared for the weird and luscious landscape that unfolds on its pages.



Paul Landymore



Verdi Guy



Helen Bernhagen



Krissy Kneen

Tinkers

Paul Harding \$24.95 PB

Paul Harding's debut, Pulitzer Prize winning novel is quite simply a gem. It is a story about time, literally as the protagonist is a clock repairer and figuratively in its depiction of how we live our lives in those precious moments allotted us. For George Washington Crosby time is almost at an end when we first meet him in the final week of his life bed bound and surrounded by variously patient and grieving relatives. Unable to move his mind detaches itself from the present as memories of his life swirl and combine with meditations on existence. It is also the story of George's father Howard who trades the hard scrabble backwoods of New England aboard his cart laden with household goods. With a wife and four children to support, Howard's days are long and desperate, made even more difficult for two very different reasons. Howard is an epileptic and when taken by a fit he can wake to find precious hours of the day gone as he lies bruised and bloodied on the ground. This uncontrollable violence is countered by a poetic soul and as he wends his way through the landscape often distracted by what he sees. It is here that Harding's skill takes flight and the pages fill with the rich language of a man who has seen and understood the beauty of nature. For me this book brings to mind Bruce Chatwin's *Utz* and Cormac McCarthy's *Child of God*. Although all three are very different in theme they share one key element, the depth of their narrative is expansive, far exceeding their brief page length and provide a deeply satisfying read not always found in longer books.

The Cardturner

Louis Sachar \$25.00 HB

From the author of *Holes* and my personal favourite *There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom*, comes a fresh novel centred on the game of bridge. It may seem like a strange idea for a young adult book and the narrator even admits that "reading about bridge isn't exactly thrilling" but Louis Sachar makes this book work. He writes through the eyes of Alton Richards, a droll 17-year-old who has just finished his junior year of high school. The summer is looking bleak for Alton - his girlfriend has dumped him for his best friend and he doesn't have money or a job.

When Alton's blind uncle asks him to attend bridge games with him he agrees, mainly because his mother insists that they should be on the right side of their rich, old uncle. This decision soon turns out to be a lot more complex than Alton could ever have imagined. As his relationship with his uncle develops and he learns more about his family, deeply buried secrets are uncovered and a romance that spans decades is finally brought to a conclusion.

A lot more than a book about playing bridge, *The Cardturner* delves deep into the idea of family and explores issues of friendship, loyalty, aging and death with humour and compassion.

Boys and girls aged 13+

Sex & Stravinsky

Barbara Trapido \$33 PB

Barbara Trapido, best known for her Whitbread award winning novel *Brother of the More Famous Jack*, has once again beautifully written a book with comic plotting and interesting complex characters. In *Sex & Stravinsky* there is something for everyone: intellectuals, Australian glamazons, freedom fighters, hippies, writers, abused servants, bizarre French exchange students, ballet dancers, crosspatch teenage girls and one co-dependant mother I wanted to strangle.

Sex & Stravinsky is set in both 1975 and 1995. The action moves fluidly between Bristol England and post-apartheid Durban South Africa. The plot tracks the complex lives of Josh, Caroline, Hattie, and Herman and their respective children, siblings and parents. There are some wonderful insights into these peoples' personalities and their foibles, strengths and failings. A complex web of shared history connects these families in ways even they don't understand. The power and lure of the past shimmers from every page, but family history is shown to be a harsh task-master.

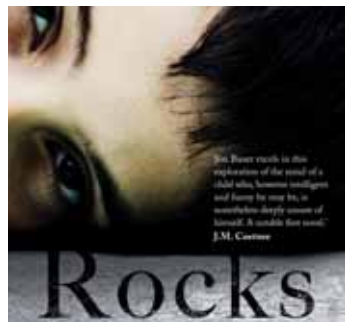
Sex & Stravinsky is Barbara Trapido's seventh novel and is a wonderful achievement. It's beautifully written, deftly-plotted and moves skilfully from domestic drama to global themes and back again. My only criticism is perhaps the ending was a little rushed. I look forward to reading her backlist.

I Am Number Four

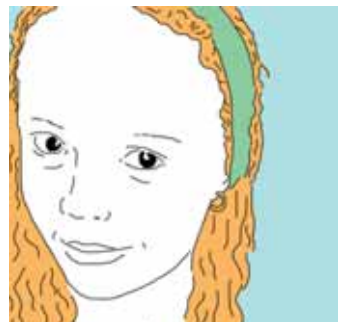
Pitticus Lore \$19.95 PB

Pitticus Lore is not the author's real name. We know now that this book was co-authored by two people. One of these people is the wonderful James Frey of *A Million Little Pieces* fame/infamy. It is quite common to find a certain sloppiness in co-authored books, a slight lag or inconsistency of style, but there are none of these problems here. This is old fashioned storytelling of the highest order. The kind of book that we used to enjoy as children filled with adventure, mystery and the possibility of romance. This is certainly a young adult book but one that a parent can easily share with their child, throwing themselves into the fantasy of the world with a nostalgic vigour. The plot has echoes of the Superman story, a young boy from another planet waits to find out what his superpowers might be as he comes of age. To heighten the tension the boy is being hunted by aliens from yet another planet. This interplanetary showdown is to be enacted on earth. To up the stakes yet again there is the possibility that these evil aliens are interested in invading Earth while they are at it. Throw in a beautiful girl for a love-interest and a nerd-boy friend who believes his father was abducted by aliens and you have all the elements of a pulp sci-fi classic.

This book is filled with high adventure and solidly good writing, edge of your seat cliff-hangers and characters that seem familiar because they are age-old archetypes brought to life in a fresh way. No wonder Steven Spielberg has picked up the film rights to this one. Give it to the young person in your life and have a sneaky peak yourself while you are at it. You might find yourself sucked into a wild but enjoyable plot.



Krissy Kneen



Nellie Godwin-Welch



Fiona Stager



Fiona Stager

Rocks in the Belly

Jon Bauer \$32.95 PB

Jon Bauer remains in Australia on a Distinguished Talent Visa, a privilege shared by a rare few including J M Coetzee. The visa was gained before the publication of his first book and the publication of his debut novel shows that it was not given in vain. *Rocks in the Belly* reminds me of reading *The Butcher Boy* by Patrick McCabe.

Bauer captures the same sense of growing horror in this emotionally mature work. This is the story of a man who returns home to care for his dying mother, but it is also the story of his younger self, the eight year old boy who was crippled by jealousy as his parents took in one foster child after another without realising the devastating effects this generosity would have on their own son.

The power of this book is its ability to stride steadily towards its own dark heart, never missing a beat along the way. This is a difficult protagonist to like but our insights into his childhood make his adult self utterly compelling. Not a light holiday read, but a clear strong voice from a new prodigious talent in Australian literature. Look out for this one when they are doling out the awards in 2011. Jon Bauer is the real deal.

I am Nujood, Aged 10 and Divorced

Nujood Ali and Delphine Minoui \$24.95 PB

What a wonderful read! *I am Nujood, age 10 and divorced* is the story about a courageous young girl and her fight for justice. Forced at a very young age to marry a man three times her senior and suffering from emotional and physical abuse daily, she did what no other girl in her country had ever done before – fled to the capital courthouse of Yemen and demanded a divorce. Through her determination she became the youngest ever divorcee in the world.

Simply written but well told, this is an inspiring story of a girl, fighting for the right to justice and the chance to be a ten year old girl again. Nujood has since broken the conspiracy of silence in Yemen and set an example to follow where almost half the girls are forced to marry under the legal age of 15.

A must read – because not only does it tell the plight of Nujood, but opens our eyes to how lucky we really are to live in a country where these flagrant breaches of justice, so common in developing countries, are unheard of.

Cutting for Stone

Abraham Verghese \$24.95 PB

This story is a riveting saga of twin brothers, Marion and Shiva Stone, born of a tragic union between a beautiful Indian nun and a brash British surgeon at a mission hospital in Addis Ababa. Orphaned by their mother's death in childbirth and their father's disappearance, and bound together by a preternatural connection and a shared fascination with medicine, the twins come of age as Ethiopia hovers on the brink of revolution. But it's love, not politics — their passion for the same woman — that will tear them apart and force Marion to flee his homeland and make his way to America, finding refuge in his work at an underfunded, overcrowded New York City hospital. When the past catches up with him, wreaking havoc and destruction, Marion has to entrust his life to the two men he has trusted least in the world: the surgeon father who abandoned him and the brother who betrayed him.

Born of Indian parents who were teachers in Ethiopia, Abraham Verghese grew up near Addis Ababa and began his medical training there. He found his way to the U.S where he has made a life as a highly regarded medical professional and a talented creative fiction and nonfiction writer. Recently at a book conference in New York I had the great pleasure of hearing Abraham Verghese speak.

I just loved this novel. It's a big story but I was swept away by Verghese's story telling, the intriguing back drop of Ethiopian politics and compassion he has for his characters which in some way transfers to the reader.

This is a book best read in big chunks. It was such a pleasure to devour it in one sitting as I flew from Brisbane to New York. Perfect plane or holiday reading.

The Hand That First Held Mine

Maggie O'Farrell \$33 PB

I loved Maggie O'Farrell's *After You'd Gone* and was very excited to read the new book. I was not disappointed. This is a wonderfully written book with amazing insight into post-natal depression as well as colourful scenes set in the lively art world of Soho in the 50s. Such a moving and insightful book by one of our favourite novelists and one that I devoured.

When the bohemian, sophisticated Innes Kent turns up by chance on her doorstep, Lexie Sinclair realises she cannot wait any longer for her life to begin, and leaves for London. There, at the heart of the 1950s Soho art scene, she carves out a new life for herself, with Innes at her side. In the present day, Elina and Ted are reeling from the difficult birth of their first child. Elina, a painter, struggles to reconcile the demands of motherhood with a sense of herself as an artist, and Ted is disturbed by memories of his own childhood, memories that don't tally with his parents' version of events. As Ted begins to search for answers, so an extraordinary portrait of two women is revealed, separated by fifty years, but connected in ways that neither could ever have expected.

Trent Gets Bumped

an interview
by Paul Landmore

If you're a bookseller for long enough one of the enquiries you'll often get goes something like this: 'I've written a book and was wondering how I get it published'. Luck seems to play a part. Determination, tears, being a member of a writing group, writer's retreats and did I mention luck. However in the past couple of years a new way has come to my attention, that some have referred to as 'The Avid Reader Bump'. Allow me to illustrate. Last year we joyfully launched Krissy Kneen's debut memoir *Affection*. In June this year former Avid staffer Ben Law published his debut book *The Family Law* and next year will see the arrival of Christopher Currie's debut novel. So it seems that if you want to get published, working at Avid helps your chances, which may be why in August we celebrate the literary success of another family member. Sunday boy and my Speculative Fiction Sundays co-host Trent Jamieson sees the first volume of his Brisbane based Paranormal Urban Fantasy *Death Works* trilogy published, not just here in Australia, but simultaneously in Europe and the US.

Steven de Selby, the hero of *Death Most Definite*, is a Pomp, a person with the ability/duty to ease the passing of the souls of the recently deceased to the Underworld. In the C21st the business of death is just that and Steven works for the Queensland regional office, alongside his father and mother. An encounter with a alluring, rogue spirit in the Wintergarden signals the end of Steven's cushy life and the beginning of an adventure of apocalyptic proportions.

Trent's knowledge of SF is quite amazing and his reading list extremely impressive, so where did it all begin? I come from a family of readers and some of my earliest memories are treks to the library to borrow books, as many as I could – the limit was seven, but if I could convince one of my siblings to borrow books for me I would. I was a voracious reader, and most of it was SF, so by the time I was ten I'd pretty much read all the kid's stuff and moved onto the adult section. I remember reading the Magic Pudding and (Isaac Asimov's) Foundation around the same time. I've always read SF. It helped that my father loved Dr Who, and took me to see pretty much every science fiction movie that came to our little cinema in Gunnedah. The endless possibilities of SF have always appealed to me, not to mention the multiplicity of meanings you can bring to a story. Like speculative fiction writer and critic Brian Aldiss said: "Earth is the Alien planet. All a Spec Fic writer is doing is writing about the here and now, just dressing it up in shiny clothes or shooting it into space. And, well, I just think monsters and star ships are really cool".

It would appear that as soon as he started reading the desire to write his own stories was not long to follow: I started writing about the same time that I started reading, around five or six. I was writing Dr Who stories in year two, and once a teacher told me that I could write about my own characters you couldn't stop me. I can't say I was the greatest student at school, but I always did well at the creative writing assignments. I can't remember a time in my life when writing hasn't been important, and fulfilling, to me. It's made days when I was sick bearable, it's kept me company late at night, when everyone's asleep and the house is creaking, and helped me deal with the commute to work when I was working full-time.

Was there no other genre of writing that appealed? I tried, but SF elements would always seep in. A Minotaur might turn up, a spaceship bud and flower in a crater in the backyard, or a magical door would appear in a wheelie-bin. SF gets in your blood, and in the way you see the world. It's hard to write anything without it tinting your stories.

Of course novels don't usually appear out of thin air, and Trent has been many years at perfecting his craft, mostly with short stories, two of which have won Aurealis (Australian SF) Awards: I've written about a hundred – not counting the hundreds of false starts - published around seventy, in six countries, and four languages. Which isn't too bad, but not nearly as impressive as some of my writing mates.

You always appear supremely chilled, so I wanted to know if there had ever been any dark times? Not really. Writing's about the only thing I'm mildly proficient at – if I didn't write I don't really know what I would do. It's always been a comfort to me. And the few times it hasn't have been when I've confused the business and publishing side of the writing with the actual writing itself. They're very different things.

With all this knowledge of SF and years of writing behind you why did you choose Urban Fantasy for your debut novel? I didn't. I wish I could be that strategic. I never expected to write an Urban Fantasy series, I just tripped over the genre. In fact I was really just trying to write something a little weird and exciting about the city of Brisbane, and riffing off the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. That it was Urban Fantasy had to be pointed out to me. I love Brisbane, I fell in love here, and the city was wrapped up in all that enchantment. What place isn't magical when you fall in love there? It's a great city to devote three books to.

So what now for Australia's next big SF writer? Well, it'd be lovely to be Australia's next big SF writer, though I'm just so happy to have the chance to actually see some of my obsessions in print. I've got lots of things in the works – there's a Science Fiction series (with lots of monsters) called Roil I would love to sell – but then again something else might just come out of the blue and surprise me.

Death Most Definite by Trent Jamieson will be launched at Avid Reader, Friday 13th August.



→ From the Editor

All my friends are getting book deals. Maybe this is like the time of your life when suddenly you get invited to a million weddings, or when everyone is pregnant all of a sudden as if pregnancy were something you could catch.

When my own book deal came through in 2009, it was the best day of my life and I wanted to share it with the people I love the best. I lay awake at night wishing that my writerly friends could experience this kind of insane joy with me. Now, my dream has come true. My closest writing companion and fellow Avidian, Christopher Currie was next to fall as he was offered a contract from my own publisher Text. Then it was like pins falling at a bowling rink, Anna Krien (ex Avid), Benjamin Law (ex Avid), Trent Jamieson (Avid), and all of their books that I have heard about for so many years are about to sprout on our shelves like mushrooms. I have begun to think of our bookshop as a crèche from which to grow books. Perhaps it is something in the coffee, but it seems that a cell of writers has just been uncovered at 193 Boundary Street, West End. I feel insanely proud of our writers and know that the Avid Push will shape the future of Australian literature. So that you can share in our pride, we have published a short story by Trent Jamieson whose first book in the *Death Works Series*, *Death Most Definite* will be on our shelves on August 1st. Enjoy the story to whet your appetite for his first full published novel and while you are at it why not collect all the books by the Avid Reader crew. Who knows, one day we might have them all published in a slip-cased edition signed by the author/booksellers and stamped by the shop where it all began.

Krissy Kneen



Looking Back

by Trent Jamieson

One day out of seven
my wife leaves me.
Walks from our bedroom,
where I lie beneath her
framed pictures of
Blake's etchings.

Cain flees above the bed head, guilt stamps his face and a kind of mute terror, Newton makes his certain and eternal measurements, body and mind fixed upon the universe's verities.

My wife moves silently and our unit is silent with her. There is no creak of doors or clicking of locks, or footfalls upon the polished wooden floors — which cost us much but not as much as other deals that I have made — not even the fabric of her dress makes a sound. She leaves the unit walks to the elevator, descends to the ground floor, and onto Albert Street and, from there, to the river. I know this for I am not asleep. I have never slept that night, the night before she fulfils her contract. But then it all grows fraught and perilous that evening, everything is stilted, truncated, empty and chill; our

conversation; our kisses; our lovemaking; and, most of all, our sleep.

When the door shuts, I get up and walk to the window and wait until I see her come out of the shadow of our building, then watch until she's gone. It is unspoken, but I'm sure she knows I'm there. She never looks back, no matter how much I will it. That she might just turn her head towards me, try to glance up at the eleventh story window where I stand and watch her.

My wife is so strong, and in the grace of her steps, and the direction of her gaze — so much commitment — I see everything that I lacked, the failure that led to this. She turns down Mary St and is gone. I make a strong coffee and wait and always there is that odd tumble of memories.

—/

I do not remember the phone call, or the drive to the hospital. Just her face pale and bloodless. And the moment of realisation, the bleak and pitiless epiphany.

The doctor was compassionate.
"So unfair," he said. "So very unfair. Newly married?"

I nodded and he tisked, his face twisted with

some inner conflict. At last he smiled painfully, though reassuringly, and pressed two silver coins in my palm and led me to the elevator door.

An orderly waited there, his face dark with displeasure.

"This is highly irregular," he said.

"But not impossible," the doctor replied.

"You're nearing your quota."

"I'm a doctor, I don't care about such things," he said airily and left.

But I did.

"What's all this about?" I demanded.

"Press, the basement button twice. You'll know what it is and who you are dealing with at once. Everybody does," the orderly said, as though he had swallowed something distasteful. "You better love her."

—/

The elevator descended, dropped and dropped and dropped; though the lights stopped at the basement it kept its arduous sinking until I thought it might never end. I stared at my grief-streaked face in the mirrored ceiling — remembering how she had done that, loved to

look at her face in the mirror when she was crying. The two silver coins burned my fingers, and I wondered what in God's name was I doing.

Finally, when the elevator stopped and the doors slid open, Death — the orderly was right, I recognised him at once — was waiting for me with a somewhat bemused expression on his pale and rubbery face. His eyes cruel and mocking, yet unfocused. His breath a miasma of medicinal strength alcohol and rot, of things shoddily preserved.

"I'll never understand it." He took my hand in his huge and clammy grip, then pocketed the coins. "Love of your life, eh? Hell is crowded these days, so I'm quite happy to deal."

—/

When the papers were signed, Death drove me to her.

The streets in that city beneath the sea were quiet, no traffic to talk of but Death's black sedan.

"She's staying at one of the new apartments. Quite nice. Must say though, the buildings lack character. Even hell has succumbed to post-modern utilitarianism — whatever that is. And let me tell you about funding, I don't know where they're allocating money but it isn't down here."

I barely heard him.

"I can't wait to see her. I can't wait to talk to her."

Death coughed significantly.

"Can't do the latter I'm afraid. Dead can't talk to the living, one of those Rules That Must Not Be Broken. You'll have to save all that chattering until you get back."

—/

My wife was a little odd towards me, which was understandable in the circumstances. Still, we kissed passionately. Her lips cold, but just as soft as I remembered them. I held her hand and led her to the car.

Death's eyes widened, his lips narrowed.

"Where do you think you're going?"

"Home."

"You obviously didn't read the small print. It might be easy to get here, but it's a heck of a lot harder to get out." Death lifted an arm and pointed down the street, index finger extended, pale skin, nail black with tomb-mud. "Yon lies the exit."

"Okay."

"Oh, and there is another thing. You cannot look back. A single glance and she will never leave."

"Tough rules," I said, lighting a cigarette and offering him one, which he took.

Death nodded and lit up. He blew half a dozen smoke rings in my face. "I've never been fair, comes with the territory. Surely you don't need me to tell you that."

—/

We left inner city hell and kept on walking. The place pressing on my skull, persistent and awful, even worse because she was behind me and I couldn't see her.

"You know what I just realised," I said to her. Not sure if she was listening, but speaking none-the-less. "Hell is those ill-conceived dollops of land development, you get on the Gold Coast. You know, brick veneered, nice lawns, but no garden to speak of, every place the same."

I could not even feel her there. The dead make no sound. There is no small talk in hell. Just silence at once profound and meaningless. My voice, rambling on nervously, echoed pallidly in my ears, but I could not stop. Talk was all I possessed, maybe it's all the living possess.

How I wanted to turn to gain some sense of her presence, but I kept my gaze straight ahead. She was an itch at the back of my neck that grew in intensity, became an ache, and then a burn. Was she behind me at all? A single inch, a dozen feet or a mile. There were no footfalls but mine, no breath to wash against my neck. No response to my chatter.

She made no sound. The dead walk silently. The dead do not breathe.

Hell sprawled endlessly. Street after street. In hell it is always three o'clock in the afternoon. Fat bellied men stood on their driveways, with their yapping dogs, and watered their immaculate yards.

Finally we came to a fence.

"I guess this is it," I said and jumped the fence. I waited there a moment, staring left and right.

Beyond lay a stretch of grass, like the rough on a golf course, and an elevator.

I strode towards it, pressed the button to open the doors and walked inside. The walls were mirrored. I kept them open for quite a while, facing forward. We weren't out of hell yet. But I did not see her.

Did I press the button now? Was she in?

The back of my neck prickled. Itches built all up and down my spine.

At last, the waiting too much, I turned around and-

Her eyes met mine, and there was such disappointment in them. And I knew, at once, another truth. The dead do not forget.

Then she was gone.

—/

Death sighed.

"We're going in circles here. Sorry, but that's it. You signed the papers. You looked back. You weren't supposed to look back." He glanced over at Persephone raven-haired, dressed in black latex, eyes shadow-rimmed but lit with fire.

"Lawyers, these days can find a hole in every contract," I said.

"He has a point there," Persephone nodded. "Do we really want to tie up half our funds in legal costs?"

"Let him have her. You've got that deal with my old man. Four months on, Eight months off. Try something like that."

Death's eyes narrowed.

"Well, it's been good for our marriage. You're lucky we just had that earthquake in LA. Damn place is crowded." He patted my back. "Now, got any more of those cigarettes?"

—/

So we returned to the living and one day out of seven, she leaves me.

We don't talk about it much. We don't talk about anything much. Orpheus tamed Cerberus with his music. I took an elevator down. I wasn't exactly the classical hero, but then Hell isn't what it used to be.

From my window I watch her walk towards the Brisbane River and the point where it meets the Styx — as all rivers do — just a little past the Botanic Gardens. We don't talk about what she does down there either. I think she might be having an affair. I think she might hate me. All I know is that her kisses are so cold when she returns. And we say I love you so damn often that I can't help thinking of those characters from Player Piano.

I asked her once if she could ever forgive me for looking back. She smiled and laughed. "Forgive you? Of course. I love you, Darling."

She didn't look me in the eye though. I wonder what she would have done in my place. And I know that she would not have failed.

Sometimes, I think that I should follow her, just open the balcony door, step through and clamber up over the rail and then...

I do not of course. Six days out of seven isn't bad. And she would not notice.

My wife never has, nor ever will, look back.

Tips from Avid Reader writers.

With an avalanche of novels falling from the Avid Reader mountain, I thought it would be a good time to hunt around in the resulting debris to find some gems amongst the literary rubble. I asked the writers who live, work and play in the Avid Reader peaks for some writerly words of wisdom. What advice has helped the Avid Writers to write their books? Were there any Eureka moments? Who were their literary mentors and what advice was the most useful to them?

Trent Jamieson is our featured author this month. Trent's trilogy "The Death Works Series" sold into three countries and the first, "Death Most Definite" is about to come out in Australia. Trent has been working weekends and the occasional weekday shift for almost two years. He has been a quiet achiever, winning awards for his short stories and having collections published overseas, and is one of the most lovely and humble people you could ever meet. It seems that he may have stumbled into sudden overnight success, but this could not be further from the truth. Trent has been hard at work for many years. He is a part of a novel critiquing group that has called themselves ROR. He admits that over the years he has called every single writer in that group for help and advice. "They are a constant source of solace to me and I hope I give back as much as I get," says Trent. The beauty of this group is that every single member has sold a novel and also had a novel rejected. It is this camaraderie and shared experience that helps Trent get through the tough times. Trent had a manuscript rejected by Orbit, but with the help of his ROR group he got straight back on the horse and sent them another novel. This was the best career move he ever made as he is now eagerly anticipating the arrival of his first born novel.

Trent's advice to any emerging writer is to "write what you love, what gets you excited. Write for yourself and read, read, read."

I asked Trent to take a trip in a time machine back to when his younger-self was just starting out. What advice would an older wiser Trent have to offer the young naïve version of himself?

"Just keep going," he says, "writing the sort of stuff I like writing and not to date the girl that gave me glandular fever in uni. She was great, but it didn't last, the fatigue did though. Other than that, I really wouldn't be using my time machine to warn myself about anything. I'd be back with the dinosaurs, or hanging with Genghis Khan, Socrates, Billy the Kid, and Abraham Lincoln and we'd be rewriting the ending to *Lost*."

Kristina Olsson, who wrote the award-winning *The China Garden* used to sell books at Avid too. She has since given up her former career in journalism which she considers one of the best career moves she has made. Kris' advice to young writers? "Be honest, be humble, write every minute you get. Don't be afraid of solitude."

Benjamin Law is gone from the Avid Staff list but not even vaguely forgotten. He has been running our Young and the Restless bookclub since he slipped off the payroll and spends much of his time socialising with the staff in general and turning up for all our staff parties, invited or otherwise. Benjamin has been a full-time writer for a year now and has struggled to eke out a living writing freelance journalism for publications like *The Monthly* and *Frankie Magazine*. Ben's first full book is *The Family Law*, recently launched at Avid, an hilarious memoir about his family who immigrated to Australia from Hong Kong and have wreaked havoc on our shores ever since.

Benjamin has benefited from the help of a number of mentors including the "irrepressible" Matthew Condon. "He offers lots of great advice, but most importantly, we laugh at each other's revolting jokes (that's important)." Ben also lists his "honorary wife" Anna Krien as a big influence in his life. Anna also worked at Avid for a while and has been in Benjamin's life for much longer. "We got signed to the same publisher at a similar time. Our advice to each other usually consists of - 'Step away from the laptop, and go for a swim' says Ben. "It's a dream to get a book out into the world, but even after you're signed

and handed a contract, writing continues being the gently abusive bastard it always has been."

When asked about the dreaded writer's block, Ben insists that his problem isn't writer's block at all "More often, I suffer from writer's diarrhoea. In fact, I need writer's Imodium. Someone hand me a nappy."

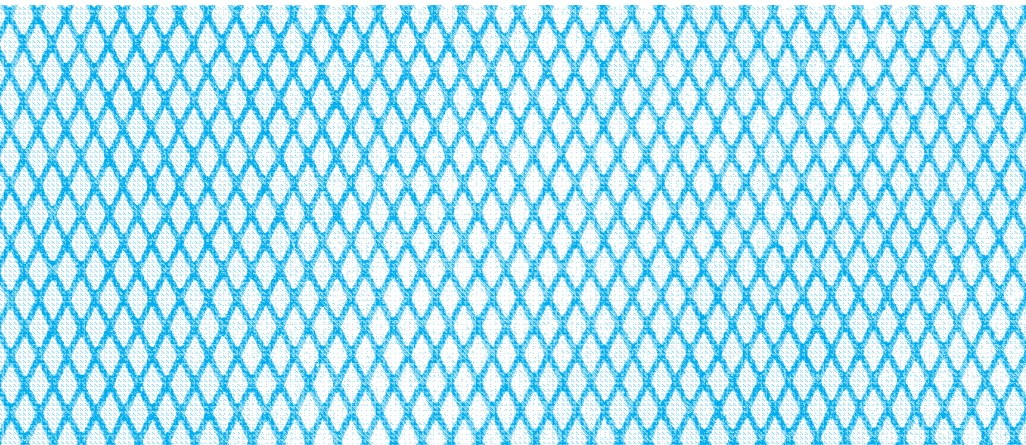
His advice to young and emerging writers? "Make sure you have friends who want to be writers too. You won't survive without them. Also, read whatever you can get your hands on. You'll never meet a musician who doesn't listen to music voraciously, but I have met some odd people who claim they want to be writers, but don't read very much at all. That's weird."

Anna Krien's first book *Into The Woods* arrives on our shelves in September. Anna did a stint at Avid. We can't claim to have made her into the wonderful writer that she is today because she was already off winning awards and getting published in *Best Australian Poetry / Essays / Fiction* before we stumbled across her. Still her time at our counter was brief but sweet. We interviewed Anna at a time when her book was going back and forth between her own desk and her editor's desk

"I am currently in birthing pains as we speak (books being square-shaped make them extra difficult to push out)... so forgive lapses of wit, ha-ha's and general wisdom."

Like all of the Avid scribes, Anna waxes lyrical about her solid team of writer friends. "It hasn't been a mentor or words of wisdom that has kept me on track so much than it has been a core group of writing friends, in particular my dearest husband Benjamin Law," (NB Benjamin is gay and Anna is happily partnered to another man) "and Romy Alice Ash, aka 'Tim Winton in short shorts'. There has also been my unique inability to do anything else and with that incapacity, a fear of 'what if I can't even write?' that still pushes me forward, word to word, sentence to sentence, deadline to deadline."

Anna is very familiar with writer's block. I asked



her how she deals with this old foe. "Swim. Run. Shoot hoops down at the local primary school after 3.30pm. Read. Get drunk. Cry. Self-diagnose on the Internet. Break up. Make up. Enrol in veterinary science at the local TAFE. Swim. Run. Read. Write a sentence, and suddenly it's all on again."

When asked about the worst decision she had made for her writing career Anna had this to say: "The second worst decision I ever made regarding my writing was self-publishing a collection of my poems and writing when I was twenty, an age when I should have known better but instead believed my words contained an infinite wisdom. The worst decision I have ever made writing-wise was to then disseminate numerous copies of this 'book'. I am still tracking them down, one by one."

Ronnie Scott used to have my job as events coordinator at Avid Reader. Ronnie is the mastermind behind the runaway success of *The Lifted Brow*. Ronnie is an unflinching editor who has rejected the Avid band of writers almost as many times as he has accepted us for publication. Ronnie is currently finishing his PhD and his novel at Melbourne University and has had to deal with the dreaded writers block on more than one occasion. Says Ronnie, "I think the most important thing is to have a routine, but it's also trying out a range of routines, and knowing when to shuffle them. Sometimes it works to do 1,000 words a day, but other times if, for example, I have to make a character walk to the end of the beach and I don't know how to do that, I'll realise I've written 5,000 words of distractions to avoid writing the hard thing. That's when I'll change the rule: I can do 5,000 words of bullshit if I want, but no matter what, the character has to be at the end of the beach before I leave the desk. And it's always easier to fix something once you've got it on the page."

Ronnie is quite a mover and shaker in literary circles and he has not got to his current position without putting in the leg-work. "Work for free for a while," is Ronnie's advice. "Do things that interest you, and I promise it will leverage out

into paid work eventually. Also – people will tell you, rightly, that it's a network industry, but nothing in the world can disguise bad writing, OR good writing, so always make sure you expend most of your energy on the sentences themselves.

Christopher Currie has been working at Avid for five years and his first novel is to be published through Text Publishing in 2011. He agrees that to be surrounded by writers is the best thing for your work. "I have been lucky enough to be friends with some supremely talented writers in and around Brisbane who have provided plenty of support and/or success for me to envy, many of whom work or have worked at Avid Reader, and many others who are customers of the shop. I think five book contracts to Avid staff members in two years is a pretty bloody good strike rate! While Brisbane's literary scene is small, it is also open and supportive."

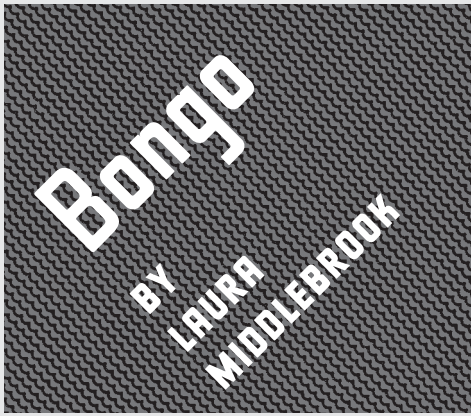
When asked about the best decision he has ever made in relation to his writing career, Christopher says "apart from being lucky enough to score a job at Avid Reader, probably my blog, *Furious Horses*, which I started in March 2008, with the express purpose of returning my writing to some sort of routine. To this end, I promised to post a short story every day for a year on the blog, which I did. Quite apart from fulfilling its purpose, *Furious Horses* gave me a point of difference, allowing me to clamber out of writer's no-man's-land and give me something of a profile, even if it was nothing more than "that crazy story-per-day guy".

My own book, *Affection* was released in August last year and going through the whole publication process was one of the most eye-opening experiences in my writing career. The most important lesson I learned from this process was that your networks and friends are the backbone of any publicity campaign. I called on my network of writers more than once in the nerve-racking run up to launch day. Many more established writers sat me down with a coffee (or a neat vodka), and helped me to understand what to expect in the coming

months. My friends Tweeted and Facebooked and email alerted till their fingers were raw. The relationships you establish before your publication turn into a sudden and necessary net to catch you when you fall. The other important thing I learnt was that you will fall occasionally, and that it is important to remember that there will be good and bad reviews, supporters and detractors, speaking engagements that are great and ones that go badly.

If I had to give advice to an emerging author, I would tell them that publication is not an answer. It is a nice distracting validation of your hard work. It is a way to get others to read what you have written, but it is important to remember that writing is a relationship that happens between you and the page. The prize is a completed manuscript that you feel proud of. Even if you get a book published there will always be another book to write and writing just doesn't seem to get any easier. It is a hard, lonely and often soul-destroying job and that is what you have signed up for.

If I could go back in time and talk to my younger pre-publication self, I would warn myself that the writing will lead to a lifetime of insecurity but that all the self-doubt and tears are worth it. Never, never give up. I would tell myself this because there were moments when I almost gave up and in retrospect I wish I had relaxed more. I wish I had laughed more and lightened up and been a better friend to my long-suffering supporters. It is not too late to take this advice even now. I met with my mentor, editor Judith Lukin Amundson the other day and this meeting underlined all of this for me. "Write for the book itself", she told me, "remember it is your job to take care of the book that you are writing. Your job, no one else's." This is what I would go back in time and tell myself. "Krissy," I would say, "Take care of yourself, take care of your friends, and, most importantly, take care of your books." These are the most important lessons that I have learned.



It was something to do with the bones in his feet. The operation would cost three grand. We didn't have that kind of money. 'But we love him' my wife kept saying. She would ask me in front of the kids if I'd made up my mind about Bongo.

"Yeah, Dad. What are you gonna do?"

My daughter offered her lifesavings. Thirteen dollars and sixty-five cents. My son just sat there with the dog. I looked at my wife and walked away.

"Oh, come on, Dad. Don't be so mean."

I thought about it for a couple of weeks. I thought about a third credit card. I thought about maybe pawning some of those fishing rods I'd bought with my tax money last year. Probably wouldn't get much for them but it would help. I thought about how Bongo was a dog.

I avoided him most of the time. He couldn't move very well so he normally just sat out the back near the clothesline. When he did make a journey through the house, I made sure those heavy paws never came too close.

I told them all over dinner one night.

"We just don't have the money."

My daughter started crying. My son called me a dickhead. My wife just looked at me.

"Geez. It's not like I'm killing him or anything. He'll just die a natural death."

A few weeks later I got drunk after everyone had gone to bed. I finished my carton off and then drunk my wife's cooking wine. I went out the back and had a ciggie. I could hear him breathing. I could see his eyes. I went and laid with him on the cold cement. I touched his feet. I touched the bones in his feet. I stroked his side. I woke up when the sun came up. I put the bottles quietly in the bin. I went to bed covered in hair.

Avid Reader Bookclubs



Fiona's Open Bookclub

Meets the first Wednesday night of the month at 7pm and the first Thursday morning of the month at 9:30am.

- July 7th & 1st: *Siddon Rock* by Glenda Guest
- August 4th & 5th: *Let the Great World Spin* by Colum McCann
- September 1st & 2nd: *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey

Australian Bookclub

Meets the first Tuesday night of the month at 7pm.

- July 6th: *Glissando* by David Musgrave
- August 3rd: *Indelible Ink* by Fiona McGregor
- September 7th: *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey

It's a Bloody Crime Bookclub

Meets the first Saturday of the month at 2pm.

- July 3rd: *A Beautiful Place to Die* by Malla Nunn
- August 3rd: *Bleed for Me* by Michael Robothom
- September 7th: *In the Shadow of Gotham* by Stefanie Pintoff

Young & the Restless Bookclub

Meets the first Thursday night of the month.

- July 1st: *Generation Kill* by Evan Wright
- August 5th: TBA
- September 2nd: TBA

Adaptation Bookclub

A bookclub for film lovers! Read books that have become films, watch their film adaptation and come discuss what happened to the story in the process.

Meets the last Monday of the month at 7pm.

- June 28th: *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro and the film by James Ivory
- July 26th: *Jaws* by Peter Benchley and the film by Steven Spielberg
- August 30th: *High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby and the film by Stephen Frears
- September 27th: *The Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and *Apocalypse Now* by Francis Ford Coppola

Speculative Fiction Bookclub

One Sunday afternoon a month at 5pm

- July 4th: *Foundation* by Isaac Asimov
- July 25th: *Infected* by Scott Sigler
- August 29th: *Death Most Definite* by Trent Jamieson
- September 26th: *Year of the Flood* by Margaret Atwood
- October 24th: *The Windup Girl* by Paolo Bacigalupi
- November 28th: *Wonders of a Godless World* by Andrew McGahan

Receive 10% off when you purchase your book for any of our bookclubs.

Special customer review

by Jane Greenwood



Traitor

Stephen Daisley

Australians and New Zealanders are brought up on the stories of the Anzacs' time at Gallipoli and the stories of heroism and mateship, begun with Ashmead-Bartlett's dispatches — the heroic landings, the bravery under fire, the sacrifices of one mate for another, and the narratives of courage such as that seen in the work of Simpson and his donkey in rescuing the wounded. The historical literature is full of such narratives, and latterly, the growth of mutual respect between enemies. Recently the work of Turkish film-maker, Tolga Örnek, has enlarged our understanding through his use in the documentary, *Gallipoli*, of the many voices, Turkish, French, British and Antipodean, that beg to be heard.

Few novels have been written about the subject, however.

Ironically, one of the first concerns an Anzac, a New Zealander, whose developing friendship with his enemy, a Turkish doctor — both wounded under fire while trying to save an Australian soldier's life — leads him to help his new friend escape from hospital and attempt to travel to Greece. They are betrayed by the fisherman they engage to help them, and each must then deal with life afterwards, the New Zealander, David Monroe, whose story this is, being branded as a traitor and sentenced to death. At his court martial, Monroe admits,

'I cannot explain what I did.' The Australians ordered to carry out the execution refuse, and Monroe is imprisoned, suffers the terrible indignity of Field Punishment, and is eventually released to work as a stretcher bearer in France. Mahmoud is also, later, sentenced to death in the new secular Turkey of Kemal Attatürk, for his membership of the Sufi sect, but is not so fortunate: the sentence is carried out.

Stephen Daisley's novel, published by Text, engages the reader from the start, with its kindly, decent New Zealand shepherd, Monroe, and the more urbane and mystical Mahmoud — he is a Sufi, a Whirling Dervish. *Traitor* demands our attention to basic questions, especially those we ask in time of war: Who is my enemy? Who is my friend? Would I be prepared to die for my friend? Would I be prepared to betray my country for him? How should I respond to my neighbours? What are my beliefs?

Mahmoud, a doctor, a mystic, is also a teacher. His text is love; he teaches David that a human's first duty is to love and be compassionate. His teaching method is to tell stories, which David absorbs and which inform his later life, despite, at times, admitting that he 'understood very little of what he was hearing' but had 'never felt such peace in the presence of another. ... He felt forgiven, and capable of anything.' Mahmoud, however, is now incapable of his dancing as a Dervish: one of his feet has

been amputated, following his injury. While accepting of his fate — 'Thus it all passes away' — he teaches David to whirl, and to achieve something of the mysticism he possesses. David is not always a willing pupil: 'Do we have to have a why?' he asks, and Mahmoud answers, 'Only animals don't ask, David, my brother. Everything humans do is asking that very question.'

On his repatriation to New Zealand, Monroe returns to his simple and isolated life as a shepherd, called to account from time to time for his traitorous behaviour whenever the political atmosphere demands he be investigated as a danger to the country. He never marries, but in his compassion for a mother whose son he has seen go 'over the top' to his death in France, he forms a loving relationship that nevertheless ends in tragedy. Further isolated by his part in this sad affair, he never acknowledges the daughter who is its result, until it is too late. Yet it is she who is with him at his death, and it is Mahmoud he sees as he dies, welcoming him home.

Daisley's narrative style is engaging and poetic, and highly cinematic. He revels in the detail of scenes, such as Monroe's court martial, describing the look, the feel of the tent in which it occurs, the sound of the fly buzzing, the inconsequential sounds of the life going on outside. The action jumps in time and place: Monroe lies dying in Papanui, New Zealand,

following a coronary; essentially the narrative is a journey 'home' through a dying man's memory, from New Zealand to Lemnos, Gallipoli, Egypt, and France, and like memory the journey is often associative rather than linear. Though the narrative can be demanding — the reader has work to do to fill in the occasional gaps and silences in the story, and to my mind, at least, Monroe's decision to help Mahmoud escape, and to go with him, is rather too briefly canvassed — Daisley's starting point is ironic, and thought-provoking. In choosing to leave the fighting and help an enemy, Monroe is a traitor, and yet ... as a stretcher-bearer he saves lives and brings comfort and gentle humanity to the wounded. Chiefly, it is through the characters of the gentle Monroe and the more sophisticated mystic, Mahmoud, that Daisley achieves the narrative drive: in their gentle ways, despite their being traitors, lies the understanding that while war offers the worst that humans can inflict on one another, it also offers the chance to make something beautiful and good out of the horror.

Traitor is a really interesting and engaging addition to the Gallipoli story, and one that asks readers not to take their myths at face value.



TEXT PUBLISHING



Rhythm O (1974)

Black & white photograph of performance, Marina Abramovic

*Have you ever wandered into
a modern art gallery and
looked at a work of art and
been completely bamboozled
by its existence?*

You may have asked yourself what is this? What could this possibly mean? Do I just not get it? Sometimes this frustration leads people to dismiss or even hate such a work, and maybe the artist behind it too. Other times, people give up on art because they feel it is impenetrable and excludes them. This phenomenon of art-angst has often troubled me as an artist and a lover of art and has provoked me to ask the question 'do you need to read about art to understand it?' I mean, you don't have to read up on the history of literature or cinema to appreciate a book or film, do you? Or, do you?

My answer to this question is 'no', you don't have to research what motivated Jackson Pollack to stand over a canvas and splash drips of paint over it in order to understand it. In fact, I don't think you have to 'understand' art at all. Art is not a test. It's something for you to physically experience, contemplate and react to, rather than a thing you have to 'read'. There is no specific meaning in Pollack's colourful stripes, whirls and blobs of paint that seem to have aggravated so many people. But, the immensity of his canvases and their colour feel like they measure you and they do get you wondering how he got the paint on there like that. However, if you do get curious enough and want to peek at those blurbs on the wall in the gallery or pick up a book you will find out how his splashes have earned him the prestige of being known to many as the father of performance art. Does this knowledge change the visual impact of his work, I don't think so, but it may help you to appreciate the rebellion that gave it birth.

So I thought I'd give a little tour of the other art that some love to hate, including the much maligned performance art, to inspire some affection in those of you that may have given up on them.

The Monochrome

"That's not art, there's nothing there!" is the most popular outcry against the humble monochrome. The monochrome has been with us for almost 100 years and it still retains the power to shock and infuriate people. Kazimir Malevich painted *Suprematist Composition: White on White* in 1918, a small canvas that showed a painterly white square, slightly tipped to one side floating against a background filled with a fractionally different tone of the same colour. For those who saw it at the time, this was a visual revelation, a new vocabulary of painting that was new and indeed shocking. This painting did not depict a scene but lay its visual elements bare. Later in 1961 Yves Klein had patented his own colour known as International Klein Blue and created *Blue Monochrome* a large rectangular canvas of pure vibrant colour that almost prickles your sight with its brightness (it really does, I've seen it!) . Contemporary artist, Anish Kapoor pushes the monochrome further into space to challenge our perception with works like *Void* (1991-1992), a gigantic blue cup-like structure mounted to the wall at QAG that confounds your sense of depth, and interior versus exterior.

Performance Art/Video Art/Feminist Art

These three friends often collide to upset people the most. Marina Abramovic has just been the subject of a major retrospective at MoMa, NYC celebrating over four decades of her work as a leading provocateur in all three of these mediums. In 1974 when she first performed her work *Rhythm O*, which consisted of a table filled with objects that people were to use on her as desired and for which she took full responsibility, she unleashed a controversial act that upset many people including herself. This six hour performance climaxed when after being stripped and cut someone put a gun to her head. This work continues to stimulate debate about the cruelty people are capable of when allowed to control another person and also about the culpability of the artist in this situation. Imagine if you had been in that room – would you have left, intervened, participated?

Jemima Wyman is a Brisbane artist who recently exhibited at the IMA and makes brilliantly coloured, kaleidoscopic works that often involve her performing in abstract costumes against highly patterned backgrounds. Her video performances see her behave and move her body in seemingly nonsensical ways in order to deconstruct the way we normally see and experience the body everyday and how clothing is used to define it. When I watch her videos I do feel confused but it's because Wyman is rattling my eyes with the movement of all that colour that fills the screen and her actions defy exact comprehension. She performs a dance of signs I recognize but in a way I haven't seen them before. And, I didn't need a book to recognize this strangeness against daily reality.

I hope my mini tour has made these forms of art a little harder to hate and that some haters realize all they need to know is right in front of them. Modern art may not always be pleasant but someone once told me it's often more important to ask yourself why you dislike something rather than just examine what you do like. You may find out new, more interesting (and possibly uncomfortable!) things this way.

The best Young Adult Books



Anna Hood

Unhooking the Moon

Gregory Hughes \$17.95 PB
July 2010

Bob and his sister, Marie Clare (aka The Rat) could not be more different. Bob is 13, has a secret crush on his French teacher and is ordinary in every way, whereas his 10 year old kid sister The Rat has dreams of becoming a movie star and has an eerie ability to predict the future. The Rat effortlessly lives life to the full at every opportunity.

Unfortunately tragedy strikes and they are left orphaned by the sudden death of their single parent father. The siblings decide that living a life in foster care, possibly separated, isn't for them. With only the vaguest details about a long lost uncle living in New York City, these prairie kids go on their very own road trip adventure to find a place to belong.

It must be said that Bob's equal parts exasperation and devotion to his precocious and hilarious sibling is quite simply one of the most endearing aspects of this novel. I couldn't help but love this book. It encapsulates the love that siblings have for one another. Together you might be the most unlikely duo, different in every way, yet you love your sibling and would do anything to see them happy.

A wonderful novel for 10-14 year old readers.



Anna Hood

Magpie

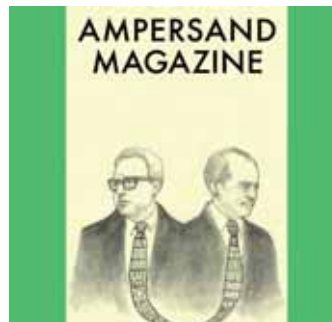
Luke Davies, illustrator
and Inari Kiuri \$25.00 HB

"My father and I. We went to the edge of the falls for revenge, to find my attacker the magpie..." Luke Davies' poem 'Childhood Terror' describes in nine lines the fear of a magpie attack and a boy's reaction as his father helps him face that fear.

Together, author and illustrator have created a wonderful picture book that takes this poem and turns into a story of a dog and his pup on a journey to find the magpie. Brilliantly realised, the illustrations bring a whole new level to Davies' poetry. Tender, funny and courageous.

For readers aged 5-7. Author Luke Davies is the award winning author of three novels, including the cult bestseller *Candy*, and five books of poetry. His book *Totem* won the 2004 Age Book of the Year and numerous other prizes. Illustrator: Inari Kiuru is a Finnish-born designer, visual artist and jeweller, based in Melbourne. She was shortlisted for the 2006 Chrichton Award for New Illustrators. This is her second picture book for children.

Best of the Independent Presses



Alice Gage

Ampersand magazine *Volume 2: Janus* *Faces*

\$10 PB

High on the cliff under the fort crouches wet and ancient an artillery magazine and it's losing its parts; old stones and cogs and nails that edge down slower than a winter Sunday through the clay and grass roots where they are jettisoned rusted many years later and drop into the crashing grey storm below.

The magazine is a collection of ideas (here, of destruction) and potentialities (here, of victory) that speak of broader battles and dead people's obsessions and the lengths of sacrifice and the signals of hope and the genius of design and all things, really.

Ampersand is a magazine that points its bow in that direction. Its content varies wildly on the subjects of creativity, societal change and the human condition and does so through the collection of works by writers and artists of many disciplines.

Its second issue, Janus Faces, features the work of some 28 contributors, including author Christos Tsiolkas, Sydney Morning Herald journalist Lisa Pryor, Dutch advertising magnate Erik Kessels, Belgian painter Stephan Balleux, playwright Nicholas Coyle, and Melbourne artist Willoh S. Weiland, whose performance *Yelling At Stars* appears as a DVD supplement.

Throughout is absurdity, sex and cheap laughs, which is quite unlike an artillery magazine, unless some mirthful corporal has struck with a posca.

www.ampersandmagazine.com.au



Ronnie Scott

The Lifted Brow 7

\$25 PB

HI EVERYBODY I am *The Lifted Brow*, a leading source of national brains. What is in me? Over time, *The Lifted Brow*, has published work by Douglas Coupland, Sage Francis, Christos Tsiolkas, Spiral Stairs, Heidi Julavits, and David Foster Wallace. And a song Neil Gaiman wrote/got Claudia Gonsou from *Magnetic Fields* to shred on. In the new one (August 2010) because I have work from Frank Moorhouse, Diane Williams, C.F., Kirsten Reed, Zachary German, also with returning megafaves like Krissy Kneen, Chris Currie, Chris Somerville, Michaela McGuire, Brian Evenson, Blake Butler, Gabe Durham, Rob Shearman, and Leesa Wockner's maths column, and throughout it drawings of penises and c. () young man things like baseball caps, wallets, shoes, keys by Jeffrey Brown, Phil Elverum (*Microphones/Mt Eerie*), John Hankiewicz, Lisa Hanwalt, and Seripop. Some have called it a "bongtopia". Others a magazine. Find out for yourself at Avid Reader.

www.theliftebrow.com



Kate Lee

Northern Territory festival Time

If you haven't been through Australia's beautiful desert then the string of festivals through the Territory is a good excuse to do so. Kick off with the Darwin festival then head down the road (a mere 1000kms) to Tennant Creek for the Desert Harmony festival and roll the remaining 500kms down to the Alice Desert festival.

The Darwin festival is a gentle way to slip into the landscape. It stakes its claim as the Top End's premier arts event. With its international status as a vibrant and eclectic multicultural affair, the festival is unique with its balmy outdoor concerts and relaxed entertainment. With local and touring performances, outdoor events, theatre, dance, comedy, cabaret, film and visual arts the festival promises a colourful holiday.

Now Tennant Creek isn't usually on the map as a prime tourist destination. Its less than inviting façade generally keeps people away. But if you dig a little under the surface you'll find there is more to this little town than meets the eye. The Warumungu people local to the area have a distinctive desert creativity and humor. Aboriginal women from the Pink Palace paint bush tucker and bush medicine, hip hop artists create songs with young people and the Barkly Writers take centre stage as the Territory's most talented literary crowd.

One of the major attractions to Tennant Creek is the Desert Harmony festival, held every year for nine days at the end of August. The festival has gone from strength

to strength. This year it features Mandinka Sound and the annual premier event DanceSite (usually held in the more established towns), which celebrates traditional Indigenous dance from Central Australia. The festival will also highlight emerging bands from the region with the Barkly Music Showcase and there's a street parade, youth performance, circus acts, film nights (the best of the St Kilda Film festival) and Darwin's Fist Full of Films. There's music and art workshops, poetry readings, public art installations that celebrate community life and culture, paste up art and the launch of the NT Indigenous Anthology by IAD Press. Yes, Tennant Creek is Australia at its rawest and the Desert Harmony festival is a wonderful way to share desert living with the locals.

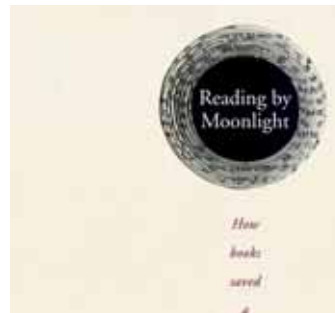
Down the track is the Alice Desert festival. The festival celebrates community art aside a selection of Australia's finest acts. With a vibrant program steeped in the desert landscape, this festival enjoys a spirited cultural exchange in the heart of Australia.

Get a car, pack a swag and sleep under the sky in this vast landscape. The night is boundless and its hard to comprehend that no suburb lies 'just over there' behind that hill. The craggy mountaintops and flat plains extend as far as the eye can see, and as you skirt along the highway desert hawks sear the sky above.

The Darwin festival:
12th – 29th August

The Desert Harmony festival 28th
August – 5th September

Alice Desert festival: 11th – 20th
September



Krissy Kneen



Krissy Kneen

Reading by Moonlight Nox

Brenda Walker \$29.95 HB

This is a memoir written by a woman who survived a brush with breast cancer, but really it is more than just that. Brenda Walker is an award winning novelist and an academic whose field of study is literature. Her life is about reading and writing and she tackles the trauma of a diagnosis of breast cancer in the only way she knows how, by reading her way through it.

Her journey through treatment and surgery is marked by the books she chooses to accompany her on her journey through this difficult time in her life. This book is part philosophy, part memoir, part literature review. Brenda takes us on her journey, showing us how books can be as powerful as self-help manuals try to be, taking us on a journey of questioning and answering the big problems in life. She asks, what is it to be alive and human? She answers this with the help of some of the greatest writers in the English language.

There is something for everyone in this book. If you, like me, are hungry for recommendations for books you would like to read, then here is a treasure trove of yet to be discovered gems. There is also a really poignant story about illness and the strength of the human spirit against adversity. A moving life journey told by a strong woman who is also a wonderful writer.

Anne Carson \$39.95 Boxed

"I wanted to fill my elegy with light of all kinds. But death makes us stingy. There is nothing more to be expended on that, we think, he's dead. Love cannot alter it. Words cannot add to it. No matter how I try to evoke the starry lad he was, it remains a plain, odd history. So I began to think about history."

This is a box of secrets whispered gently. Anne Carson, award winning poet, fiction writer and essayist has created a tribute to her dead brother. This began as a single hand-made book, a gorgeous thing filled with ideas stories, fragments of a life collected. This boxed artist book is a replica of the original. It is a poignant and moving biographical record but also, much more than this, it is a reflection on death by one of our most insightful poets.

Each re-reading of the work seems to uncover a new facet of the gem that is this book. The whole thing folds out into a scroll which can be looked at in one go or the pages can be unfolded like a ribbon. Everywhere you turn there is another idea which resonates long after the box is closed.



Jason Reed

The Undead are Alive

At the moment, everyone seems to be a bit vampire crazy. The latest instalment in the *Twilight* saga has just been released and there's no shortage of vampire related fiction crowding the teen section of bookstores. Not to mention the new TV series of the immensely popular *True Blood*. But rather than indulging in a little bloodsucking, I thought brains might be more appetising. Yes it's the slow moving, groaning, brain eating, undead: zombies.

As with vampires, there have been countless books, films and comics in the zombie genre, and not all of them great. Here then, are some of the tastier morsels on offer, with the promise of more to come. George Romero is undoubtedly one of the touchstone directors of zombie cinema. His zombie series set the benchmark with *Night of the Living Dead* almost 40 years ago. Since then he has written and directed no less than five zombie films, each eagerly anticipated, with the latest being *Survival of the Dead*. Each of the films has also been a vehicle for Romero to make some kind of statement, which was often political, and the medium he chose to deliver that message just so happened to be zombie films. There have also been some other notable contributions over the intervening years. Danny Boyle created a visceral, gritty reality with his entry into the genre with *28 Days Later*. Shot using hand held cameras, there was a palpable urgency and panic in the film as the survivors attempted to escape the living dead. Rather than the traditional, slow moving, yet persistent zombies, *28 Days Later* heightened the stakes with

undead that could run. This meant that survivors could no longer easily put distance between themselves and the horde. In a fantastic comic turn, Simon Pegg brought us *Shaun of the Dead*, a parody of zombie films, yet also a respectable zombie film in its own right. Together with co-star Nick Frost, they killed some zombies, did their best to save their friends and family, and still had time for a pint. *Dead Snow* was a recent German film, which combined Nazi's with zombies. What more could you ask for? Set in the snow-covered hills of Norway in a remote cabin, a group of medical students on vacation get more than they bargained for. Both terrifying and hilarious, this is a must see for zombie fans.

On the film adaptation front, *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie Wars* by Max Brooks is currently in the works. This book tells the story from the accounts of survivors all over the world, of how the human race managed to survive a virtually unstoppable zombie plague. There is also a graphic novel adaptation of this book on shelves at the moment. Robert Kirkman and his New York Times bestselling series *The Walking Dead* is currently in production by AMC, the same network that brought you *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad*. Frank Darabont, who has previously directed many Stephen King adaptations including *The Green Mile* and *The Shawshank Redemption*, is helming the adaptation. This graphic novel series is epic and ongoing, having just released issue number 72. The story centres on a group of people trying to survive not only a zombie apocalypse, but also each other.

So if you've had enough of vampires or need to brush up on your zombie back catalogue, *Trash Video* is, as always your best option. Also, both *The Globe* and now *Tribal Cinema* have regular screenings of these kinds of films for anyone who has a hunger for brains.



Win movie tickets to see Farewell

Hopscotch Films are offering you the chance to win one of 20 in-season double passes to see the compelling new film *Farewell* when it opens in cinemas on July 1st.

In the vein of *The Lives Of Others* and based on an incredible true story, *Farewell* is a Cold War espionage film about events that changed history. In the 1980s, Colonel Grigoriev, a KGB agent disenchanted with the Communist ideal, who used the code name "Farewell", passed information to a French engineer based in Moscow, that ended up undermining the Soviet regime and contributed to its ultimate downfall.

To win a pass, simply email books@avidreader.com.au with the word FAREWELL in the subject

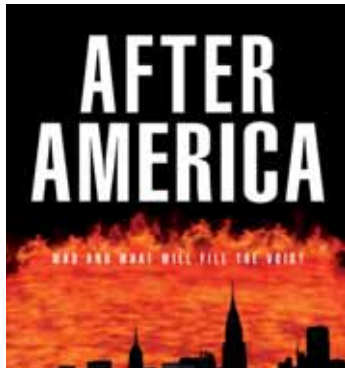
Check the ticket for details and newspapers for session times.

IN CINEMAS JULY 1, 2010



Zombie Books that Avid Loves

1. *Handling the Undead*
by John Ajvide Lindqvist
PB \$24.95
2. *The Strain*
by Guillermo Del Toro & Chuck Hogan
PB \$25.00
3. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*
by Jane Austen and Seth Graham-Smith
PB \$24.95
4. *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie Wars*
by Max Brooks
PB \$29.95
5. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: Dawn of the Dreadfuls*
by Seth Grahame-Smith and Austen
PB \$24.95
6. *Zombie Bums From Uranus*
by Andy Griffiths
Children's PB \$14.95
7. *How to Speak Zombie*
by S Mockus
Gift HB \$22.95
8. *The Forest of Hands and Teeth*
by Carrie Ryan \$23.00
9. *Zombie Felties*
PB \$19.95
10. *Zombie Combat Manual: A Guide to Fighting the Undead* Gift PB \$19.95



John Birmingham
After America

Thursday July 1st
6pm for a 6.30pm start. Free Event

One of Avid's favourites returns with the high octane sequel to his bestselling and insanely enjoyable action romp *Without Warning*.

John will be in conversation with another Brisbane literary legend Matthew Condon.

Liz Minchin
Screw Light Bulbs

Monday 12th July
6pm for a 6.30pm start. Free Event

Walkley Award winning journalist, Liz Minchin, asks if Australia can deliver better run services that would save us time, money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Mark Tredinnick
The Little Black Writing Book

Tuesday July 13th
6pm for a 6.30pm start. Tickets \$5

Join Mark Tredinnick for this Salon session aimed at writers of all sorts. Mark is famous for his series of little colourful books on writing. Join Mark as he discusses the dos and the don'ts – the art and craft of writing.

Knit in with Loani Prior
Really Wild Tea Cosies

Saturday 17th July, 2pm – bring your knitting. Free event

Grand Purrl Baa Loani Prior has launched her two knitted fantasy books all about the humble tea cosy. Join us on the back deck and don't forget to bring your wool and your needles as we have a sit in knit in with the Grand Purrl Baa herself.



Jeff Goodell in conversation with Phil Brown
How To Cool The Planet

Tuesday 20th July. Tickets \$5

When Jeff Goodell first encountered the term 'geo-engineering', he had a vague sense that it involved outlandish schemes to counteract global warming. As a journalist, he was deeply sceptical. But he was also intrigued. The planet was in trouble. Could geo-engineers help?

Meet Ian Lowe
A Voice of Reason

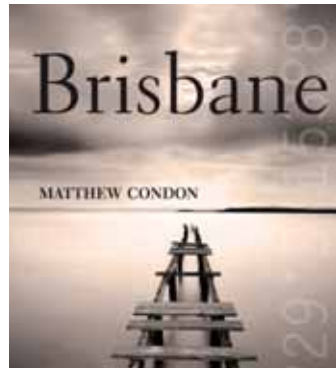
Thursday 29th July
6pm for a 6.30pm start
Tickets \$5

Environmental scientist Ian Lowe tackles the big issues facing Australia in this fascinating collection of essays.

Matthew Condon
Brisbane

Thursday 5th August
6pm for a 6.30pm start. Free Event.

Avid Reader is very excited to launch the new book by one of Australia's great writers. We loved "The Trout Opera" and the other novels and collections of short stories by the amazing Matthew Condon. We eagerly await the arrival of this new book, a lyrical look at Brisbane through the eyes of a skilled journalist with the heart of a poet.



The Art of Reading
Discussion featuring **Brenda Walker with Dr Stuart Glover and Professor David Carter**

Tuesday 10th August

The first time Brenda Walker packed her bag to go into hospital, she wondered which book to take with her. As a novelist and professor of literature, her life had been built around reading and writing. Now she was also a patient, being treated for breast cancer, fighting for her life and afraid for herself and her family. But turning to medicine didn't mean she turned away from fiction. Join our brains trust of professional readers as we discuss this fine art. Why do we read? Have our reading habits changed throughout the ages? What will happen to reading in the future?

Patrick Holland
Mary Smokes Boys

Wednesday 11th August
6pm for a 6.30pm start. Free event

With the passion of Emily Bronte in *Wuthering Heights* and the distilled beauty of Ondaatje, Patrick Holland captures the fragility and grace of small town life and how one fateful moment can forever alter the course of our lives.

Join Qld Premiers Award Winning Patrick Holland as he launches his brand new novel at this special Salon Event.

Trent Jamieson
Death Most Definite

Friday 13th August
6pm for a 6.30pm start. Free event

Once again Avid is very excited to announce the launch of another book by a much loved staff member. Trent is our Sunday worker and also co-host of Avid's Speculative Fiction Sundays Bookclub. Come and join us, it's going to be a blast!



Opening Hours

Monday
8:30 am – 8:30 pm

Tuesday
8:30 am – 8:30 pm

Wednesday
8:30 am – 8:30 pm

Thursday
8:30 am – 8:30 pm

Friday
8:30 am – 8:30 pm

Saturday
8:30 am – 6:00 pm

Sunday
8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Open most public holidays

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Overlords
Fiona Stager & Kevin Guy

Bookish Underlings
Krissy, Anna, Christopher, Kasia, Verdi, Paul, Trent, Emily, Nellie-Mae, Helen

Café
Stuart, Sophie, Melina, Verdi, Michael, Lucy and Kate