

# NEW Writers' Group Incorporated

WRITING PARRAMATTA 2021

## Zoom Workshop and Open Mic: 3-5pm Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> February

*These three works are generously loaned to us for this exercise. The authors retain full copyright.*

**Please have this document at hand plus a pen to take notes at the workshop.**

**EXERCISE:** You are on a selection panel for a new Australian journal. These three pieces have received good rankings, but your journal has only one space left. What principles will guide your decision?

### THE LAST RIGHTS (1)

Sue Chamoun

The house remained standing whilst I rummaged through the rubble.  
To the left, the Master bedroom was as cold as ever.  
Quietly, I shut the door.  
Adjacent to it is the small bathroom with a white bathtub in the corner.  
I saw a glimpse of the children, up to their noses in bubbles, playing "Dunk the yellow Duck"  
I smiled and walk away, leaving the door open.  
Walking straight ahead, I could hear the sound of laughter and tears.  
Two, brightly coloured beds fill up the room.  
It's a warm room.  
The sweet breath of innocent children can, almost, be seen clinging to the walls.  
I open the window to let the sunshine in  
Or maybe, to allow their breaths to slide off the walls and leave, silently, through the opening.  
I turned around and walked out,  
But returned to grab a pocket full of memories and headed out again.  
The lounge room had no doors.  
It was a welcoming sight for the visitors.  
The curtains remained drawn, to keep in the darkness.  
Time has not aged the lounges. The sofa beds were deep in slumber.  
They had been preserved by the icy colour they wear.  
I walked to the kitchen expecting to see pots of food simmering on the stove.  
There were always pots of food simmering on the stove.  
The sink was spotless. The taps had dried up and retired.  
The fridge seemed to be much colder these days, frozen in time.  
The floor was immaculate. There were no visible tiny footprints and yet, the echo of their tiptoeing swiftly brushed my ears then pfffft... nothing.  
I turned to the living room.  
The television had nothing to say.  
It had taken the vow of silence.  
The couches had long gone to sleep.  
I heard my heart accelerate as it leaped into the safest core of my body.  
Gasping for air, I turned to the last room of the house.  
The spare bedroom, that hadn't been spare for many years.  
I recall christening that room "the safe room".  
A raw memory of tiny children, snuggling with their mother to keep warm on those stormy winter nights, fleetingly crosses my mind.  
I crept out and locked the door, ever so gently, to keep the room safe. *Cont.*

I headed for the back veranda.  
The bird was still in his cage.  
He had lost his voice.  
He made no movement whilst staring at what used to be.  
I walked towards the garden that once was.  
Flowers on their death bed attempting to sprout amidst memories of gentle loving hands.  
Head bowed, I shuffled my feet to the front of the house expecting to see a hint of Christmas.  
There was no Christmas there.  
It had gone away with the rest of them.  
I farewelled the house, bade goodbye to the years with the last rights I was entitled to.

## **IN THE DRIVEWAY (2)**

**Norm Fairbairn**

Remind me again  
of other sunset Sundays  
played out in kite-filled parks  
with in-laws and faulty joints.

When everything we signed  
was jointly  
before I became your life's pencil mark  
to be erased in a sweep.

Tell me of other sunny days in-between  
before bloated lawyers  
wrung their hands together  
feasting on the carcass of our love.

Tell me about a life of Sundays  
in the house I picked out  
before I surrendered my claim  
by bleeding you white.

Remind me again of other sunset Sundays  
when I drove in the driveway  
all surfboards and roof racks - noisily dragging  
rubbish bins like corpses to the kerb.

In weekends of Shangri La  
poor movie choices,  
late dinner guests,  
consolation barbeques for defeated sports stars.  
I have flown my last kite,  
burnt my last steak at this place  
told my last ribald ditty  
whilst waiting for a smile.  
Remind me if you can, of  
the last time you smiled back,  
before these sunset Sundays, with me  
in the driveway, reversing.

### THE FRENCH GIRL (3)

Dianne Cikusa

In sleeping streets,  
a young girl  
is searching for  
cosmic alphabets

Her guardian attends  
to her through  
the vehicle of dreams,  
a dissipating poet  
writing in acronyms  
and constructing  
parlance from  
nuance and numeral  
His voice is emigrating  
from the lines,  
squeezing out from  
lowercase letters  
and lingering messages

'I love you,' he mouthed  
forty-eight times today  
and blew her a pastel kiss  
'Tomorrow, you should  
look for me in shards  
of broken triangles,  
mirror balls and a lotus.'

In the morning,  
the French girl  
resumes work  
on her découpage.

NWG Inc editors rank work for print publication, including online, by thinking about three broad areas. Two of them are obvious measures, ORIGINALITY and TECHNIQUE but we also rank on APPEAL, by which we do not mean cute. It might apply to a piece with small faults, but which also has impact, raises questions, is memorable. You are welcome to consider these categories before the workshop but please keep an open mind for panel discussion on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2021.

Remember, you can share two minutes of your original work at this gathering but not work you plan to submit to ZineWest 2021 😊 ZW selectors will be present.