

University of Wollongong

## Research Online

---

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts -  
Papers

Faculty of Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities

---

1-1-2013

### Song in the Dark

Christine Howe

University of Wollongong, [chowe@uow.edu.au](mailto:chowe@uow.edu.au)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/lhapapers>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Law Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Howe, Christine, "Song in the Dark" (2013). *Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts - Papers*. 894.  
<https://ro.uow.edu.au/lhapapers/894>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: [research-pubs@uow.edu.au](mailto:research-pubs@uow.edu.au)

---

## Song in the Dark

### Abstract

Where do you end up when you have nowhere to go, and no one to turn to? Paul isn't thinking clearly. After destroying a series of relationships - with his friends, his flatmates, his mum - he finally hurts the one person he cares about most of all. And then he runs away. An extraordinary and heartrending story of love, betrayal, addiction and hope.

### Keywords

song, dark

### Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Law

### Publication Details

Howe, C. (2013). Song in the Dark. The Song in the Dark (pp. 1-173). Melbourne, Vic.: Penguin Group (Australia).

PENGUIN BOOKS

# SONG IN THE DARK

Christine Howe grew up on the Far South Coast of New South Wales, and currently lives in Wollongong. She has a PhD in Creative Writing and teaches at the University of Wollongong. *Song in the Dark* is her first novel.



**SONG  
IN THE  
DARK**

**CHRISTINE HOWE**

PENGUIN BOOKS

PENGUIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group  
Penguin Group (Australia)  
707 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3008, Australia  
(a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)  
Penguin Group (USA) Inc.  
375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA  
Penguin Group (Canada)  
90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Canada ON M4P 2Y3  
(a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)  
Penguin Books Ltd  
80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL England  
Penguin Ireland  
25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland  
(a division of Penguin Books Ltd)  
Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd  
11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi – 110 017, India  
Penguin Group (NZ)  
67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, Auckland 0632, New Zealand  
(a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)  
Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, Rosebank Office Park, Block D,  
181 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parktown North, Johannesburg, 2196, South Africa  
Penguin (Beijing) Ltd  
7F, Tower B, Jiaming Center, 27 East Third Ring Road North,  
Chaoyang District, Beijing 100020, China

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL, England

First published by Penguin Group (Australia), 2013

1 3 5 7 9 1 0 8 6 4 2

Text copyright © Christine Howe, 2013

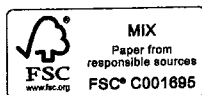
The moral right of the author has been asserted.

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this book.

Cover and text design by Tony Palmer © Penguin Group (Australia)  
Cover photograph courtesy of Getty Images/Henrik Sorensen  
Colour separation by Splitting Image Colour Studio, Clayton, Victoria  
Printed and bound in Australia by McPherson's Printing Group, Maryborough, Victoria

National Library of Australia  
Cataloguing-in-Publication data:  
Howe, Christine.  
Song in the Dark / Christine Howe  
ISBN: 978 0 14 356744 8  
A823.4

[penguin.com.au](http://penguin.com.au)



*For my grandmothers, Olive Daisy Howe and  
Enid Grace Edenborough.*

## PROLOGUE

Sunlight streams in the windows. Hetty's sprawled on the floor in her nightie, and over by the armchair, smashed glass glints in the sun. Pain spreads inwards from her hip to her belly and up to her chest, flashing across the inside of her skull. She feels too heavy and old to move. The sun pouring through the window is a pounding dryness in her head and throat. The screen door down the hall is open, swaying backwards and forwards in the breeze. Hetty feels the room recede, drawn up into the harsh light.

'Mrs Taylor? Can you hear me?'

The brightness of the walls is overwhelming. Her elbows lie on smooth, cool sheets; her feet are cold. The air is dry and sharp with the smell of disinfectant. The back of her tongue feels like it's been plastered with sand and old tobacco, and she longs for something fresh and sweet from her garden that will clean the taste from her mouth.

Mulberries. A small boy's face and shirt covered in bright stains, and an offering of berries held up to her in a grubby hand. His eyes sparkle, big and brown and intent on sharing his

find with her. She bends down to take the gift and watches him ride away, his little muscular legs propelling the bike along at an ever-increasing speed, bumping across the backyard and pulling up with a spray of dirt underneath the mulberry tree. The berry bursts in her mouth and the juice leaves a red stain on her finger, the same colour as the roses growing beside the back porch.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all those who offered their support and encouragement during the writing of this novel. Special thanks go to Fiona Inglis and Grace Heifetz at Curtis Brown for believing in the novel, Jeanmarie Morosin for deciding to publish it, Jane Godwin and Heather Curdie, and Amy Thomas, my editor, whose guidance and insights were invaluable.

The novel was written as part of my PhD in Creative Writing at the University of Wollongong, and special thanks go to my supervisor, Merlinda Bobis, for her patience, enthusiasm and close readings of innumerable drafts. Thanks also to all those who read and offered suggestions on the early drafts: Daniel Bennett, Eva Cheng, Shady Cosgrove, Mindy Currie, Danielle Durland, Matt Fenwick, Kath Hobson, Dan Howe, Myvanwy Hudson, Rike Krishnabhakdi-Vasilakis, Heidi Nettelbeck, Emma Shaw and Clare Tuckerman.

I would also like to thank Peter and Janet Howe for their constant support and encouragement, and Duncan Wilson, for living this story with me through draft after draft. Thanks finally to my grandparents, Enid and Sam Edenborough, and Olive and Joe Howe.