

Old Water Rat Publishing

The Geography & Psychology of Place (Under Threat)



Home of Burrow

Welcome!

Burrow is an e-journal published twice yearly. We publish poetry (& other micro-texts) that explore what it is to live with good or poor mental health.

We are especially interested in where self-care intersects with such priorities as: ecopoetics, postcolonialism, ekphrasis, progressive religion & secularism. We are an inclusive journal that welcomes established poets though we do have a special focus on publishing new & emerging voices (both old & young).

...somewhere in the creek, hiding in shadows,
not of Gondwanan birth and always nervously
watching their backs, these flotsam
stowaways have prospered; hunting
and burrowing their way into the market...

Phillip Hall

Editors

Rhiannon Hall (Managing Editor): is a Doctor of Creative Arts candidate at Western Sydney University where she is exploring representations of youth in young adult verse novels. She facilitates a poetry club at the high school where she works. She enjoys writing and sharing poetry with an enthusiastic group of teenagers.

When not working as an editor and teacher, Rhiannon can be found walking her daniff (the 40kg lapdog, Xena); drinking tea; reading contemporary young adult, feminist, and LGBTQIA+ literature in her hammock; eating burgers with her partner, Jason; and attending book launches, poetry readings, and live music with poet and teacher friends.

Rhiannon's poetry and essays can be found in such spaces as: Axon: Creative Explorations, BlazeVOX20, Cordite Poetry Review, Meniscus, Please See Me, Saraswati: A literary and art Ezine, and Tarot.

Phillip Hall (Poetry Editor): has a doctorate in creative arts where he researched contemporary place theory, postcolonialism, ecopoetics and contemporary Australian poetry. When not reading poetry or literary prose non-fiction, he can be found talking with his brindle boy greyhounds (named Charlie Brown & Billy Blue) or listening to bluegrass/classical music, cheering on the Western Bulldogs, and poring over his collection of Western Bulldogs footy cards.

Phillip's publications include *Sweetened in Coals* (Ginninderra Press, 2014), *Borrooloola Class* (IPSI, 2018), *Fume* (UWAP, 2018) and (as editor) *Diwurruwurru: Poetry from the Gulf of Carpentaria* (Blank Rune Press, 2015). His poetry, reviews and essays can also be found in such spaces as: The Blue Nib, Cordite Poetry Review, Plumwood Mountain and *Best Australian Poems*. Phillip's forthcoming collection, to be published by Recent Work Press in September 2021, is *Cactus*.

Phillip is a passionate member of the Western Bulldogs (AFL) Football Club, foundation member of the Doggies' AFL (Women's) side, and member of Bulldogs Pride.

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Current Issue

September 2021: non-human companions

When we chose this edition's provocation we were certain that it would result in a rather slim volume of poetry. After all, it would mean that contributors would need to write something specifically for us – who has a spare poem about their pet or garden lying around and waiting for publication?

The overwhelming response to our provocation stands testimony to how much human lives have been altered by the physical, emotional and social challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Forced to isolate from each other to reduce the spread of disease, many of us have sought companionship and connection with animals and objects that have taken on new and greater meanings than ever before.

Adopting rescue greyhounds has been such a pleasure for me. Billy and Charlie are joyful and trusting. Their need to be walked gives me a legitimate reason to leave home during lockdown and they are blithely oblivious to the bad news stories that seem to swamp my every social media account and conversation.

Charlie has become my velcro hound, assuring me that lockdown is actually an excellent idea and humans should be sent home to spend time with their pets on a regular basis (no protesting here). He is also a reminder that I have been able to give a very traumatised dog the love and security he needed to become a playful, happy and affectionate pet. A few moments fondling his velvet soft ears is the best mindfulness activity I have discovered.

I hope you find the joy and solace in these poems that our contributors have drawn from their non-human companions.

Jillian Hall

Dusk upon a wood porch in a migrant hostel *Peter Davis*

On arctic foxes and snow owls *Ann Shenfield*

How autism may present in adult female siblings *Esther Ottaway* Tree Change *Jen Webb*

In Covid Enrobing – for Shadows *Denise Antaw* Self Portrait, February 2020 *KA Nelson*

A year with Lumi *Sianna Madigan* Remnants *Margaret Zanardo*

Clear Daylight *Katherine FitzHywel* The Master *Michelle M. Mead*

The cactus when it blooms *Jill Martindale Farrar* The Tree *Christine Hill*

Winter Pruning *Christine Burrows* Deity *Gillian Swain*

Fish in a paddy field *SoulReserve* For Alice *Cheryl Achterberg*

Dawn Walk at Wittering *Pratibha Castle* The lizard *Paul Fleckney*

kitten *Scott-Patrick Mitchell* Unwelcome Fixity *Robyn Rowland*
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 Ritual *Oormila Vijayakrishnan Prahlad* Home Entertainment *Paula Bonnell*
 Hamster Home Office *John Johnson* House Sparrow Lords *Frances Daggart Roberts*
 A Passion for the birds *Noel Jeffs* Verity *Edward Caruso*
 My mother and the cat *Jeltje Fanoy*
 Dog days ('Dogs' lives are too short. Their only fault, really') *Kate Meyer-Currey*
 Mockingbird *Sean Winn* Standing On My Head In My Backyard *Kylie Hough*
 Cockatoo *Rose Lucas* Cleaning the gutters, advent *James Walton*
 Putumayo helps to make soup *Gina Mercer* Trap *Anne Carson*
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 Centred in The Centre *Lorraine Gibson* Traveller Without Swag. *Margaret Kiernan*
 Bounty *Hugh McMillan* The peculiar comfort of aliens *PS Cottier*
 A dog's eyes, Nirvana with Parmatma *Anita Nahal* Morning Walk *Rhiannon Hall*
 Thanatos *Gershon Maller* Sleep *James Montgomery* Distraction *Libby Sommer*
 Silent Songs. *Shirali Raina* Sparrows *Marilyn Humbert* 2B or other *Greg Tome*
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 To a Demented Professor *Sreekanth Kopuri*
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Pandemic Thanksgiving *Fay L. Loomis*
Another dark night *Lynn Reeves AKA Nova Christeen* Hardeeville SC 2020 *Donna Dallas*
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1994, A Dog Called Sappho *Amanda Joy* Friend for all seasons *Margaret Gudkov*
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Tree Change

Jen Webb

Tree change

You are outside among the trees, hands pressed to anguished head. I am tidying the kitchen, checking the new loaves rising in the oven, noticing that I am losing my sense of taste and the more I cook the less there is to eat. Now you are pressing your forehead against the tall gum tree, scientists say it might extend one's life by years or at least make life more satisfying, like eating dark chocolate or drinking single malt scotch, two hundred dollars per litre to confirm its worth. You swirl a tot in a wide mouth glass and breathe in its bouquet, not able just now to gulp it down, the rapid tip of wrist to mouth, the heady burn, heat rolling down through throat and gut to confirm that life still has its savour, that pain will pass, that you will press naked feet into the deep litter of bark and leaf all scurried about by wildlife, and remember what flesh says to world, that we are here today, touching you, learning to breathe you in.

Jen Webb is Distinguished Professor of Creative Practice at the University of Canberra, and co-editor of the literary journal *Meniscus*. She researches and writes about suffering and resilience. Her most recent poetry collections are *Moving Targets* (Recent Work Press, 2018), and *Flight Mode* (with Shé Hawke; Recent Work Press 2020).

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