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New & Selected Work  
2003-2025

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Publisher's note: Grateful acknowledgement is made to the editors and publishers of the books in which poems and flash fiction have appeared: *Obeying the Call* (Ginninderra Press 2003), *The Barrier Range* (Flat Chat Press 2006), *Triptych Poets* (Blemish Books 2010), *The Divorce Papers* (Mark Time Books 2010), *no suspicious circumstance* (Littlefox Press 2012), *Oradour-sur-Glane* (Littlefox Press 2017), ... *of a sudden* (Ginninderra Press 2023).

## Author's Note

Writers are often asked why they write, and poets often asked why poetry. I took on board Seamus Heaney's observation that he doesn't write because he must but because he can, and I consider myself fortunate that I can write and that publishers continue to value and support my work.

As well as being asked why we write, poets are also often asked what poetry is and/or what does it do. Personally, I avoid this navel gazing, but I do like these few quotes:

*Poetry is a momentary stay against confusion*

– Robert Frost

*Art is not an email. It's not supposed to send a message*

– David Cronenberg

*A poem should not mean/But be*

– Archibald MacLeish

Poems and flash fiction in this collection – other than new works - have appeared in my published books and Issue One of *Triptych Poets* (2010). Those published books comprise a collection of poems and flash fiction, three books of poetry, a verse novel and a chapbook.

My first book *Obeying the Call* (2003) covered a range of topics but mostly explored personal and family relationships. While some of the poems are in traditional form such as the sonnet and villanelle, most of the book is written in vers libre.

My next book was the verse novel *The Barrier Range* (2006). Although the book is about a personal journey to find an estranged uncle in Broken Hill, NSW, it is also the imaginative retelling of the 19th century expeditions of explorers Burke and Wills, and Charles Sturt. The book also touches on the dispossession and displacement of Aboriginal peoples from early Australian frontier settlement. Poetry drives the narrative; however other writing genres such as letters, newspaper articles and diary extracts are employed to enhance and enrich the story.

The book uses time shifts to bring knowledge and understanding of current culture to the chronicle of events.

The chapbook *The Divorce Papers* (2010) is a suite of poems concerning my experience of divorce. These poems – as well as several others – appeared in Issue One of *Triptych Poets* (2010).

My third full length collection *no suspicious circumstances: portraits of poets (dead)* (2012) consists of poems about poets who died because of intemperate living, had taken their own lives, or were killed in circumstances out of their control. I chose to adapt the nine-line Spenserian stanza, a fixed verse form invented by Edmund Spenser, where each stanza contains nine lines in total: eight lines in iambic pentameter followed by a single in iambic hexameter. I was drawn to the challenge of this form as I felt it was well suited to my subject matter with its stately and meditative alexandrine final line seemingly an ideal means of saying goodbye to the world.

*Oradour-sur-Glane* (2017) is about the massacre of 642 people in France in WW2 and the occupation of Paris by the Nazis. I visited the ruined village prior to writing the book, and the poems are not mere depictions of the massacre but rather attempts to capture emotional responses to the senseless suffering, loss and horror of war.

My latest book *...of a sudden* (2023) is a mixture of short poems and flash fiction pieces. This type of fiction is also known micro or sudden, hence the title of my book.

From the above description of my books, I hope it demonstrates my willingness to experiment with something different; challenges I have welcomed with each new project.

I imagine I am no different from any other poet faced with choosing which poems to include in a New & Selected. It is an unenviable task. First collections can often vary in quality, so selecting poems from *Obeying the Call* was relatively easy. Some jumped out at me as I recalled how popular they were with audiences.

*The Barrier Range* presented more challenges as I wanted to have a selection of the several writing genres I used in the book.

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