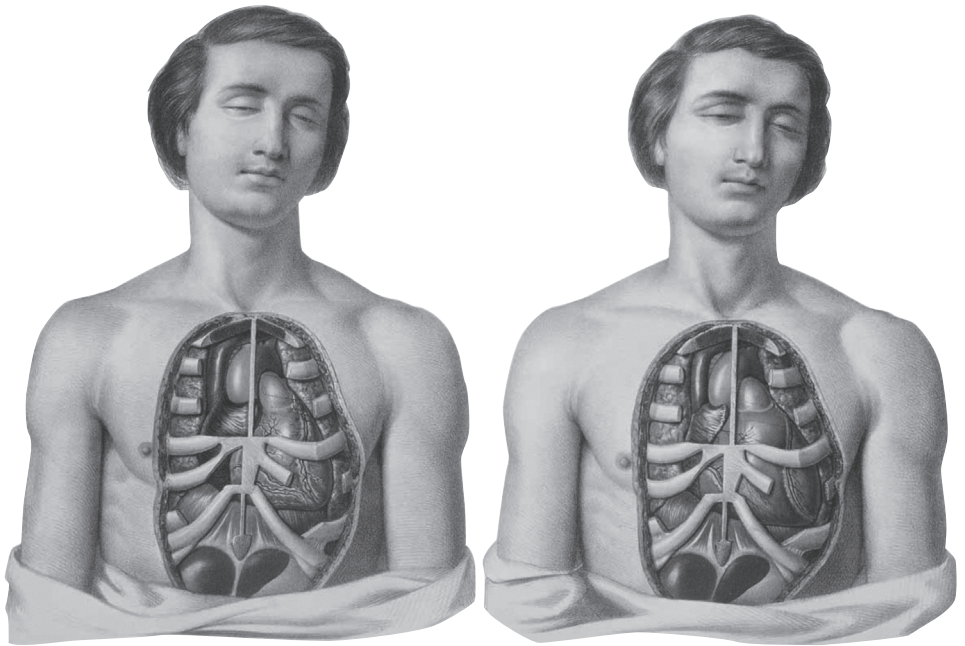


"COTTONMOUTH"



SPIT DICTION

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COTTONMOUTH

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editor SCOTT-PATRICK MITCHELL
layout PATRICK PITTMAN
illustrations JESSYCA HUTCHENS

COTTONMOUTH is a monthly performance night which is produced in conjunction with a national podcast and publication. please direct all submissions or requests to info@cottonmouth.org.au and be sure to check regular updates online by visiting www.cottonmouth.org.au (.)

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Department of Culture and the Arts
Government of Western Australia

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WRITTEN IN TRANSIT TO REIMS

Ellen Broad

I
have never dreamed
so
much as wrestled, gritty,
with a sleeping living
cruelly taking any kind of

relief
from me. These fields are not
healthily green as I believed
they would be. My head is full of
asphalt, cranes and French mathematics,
would that I was capable of

building
anything.

[Why] Is this Guy Moquet laughing?

I tell you,
one day
I will find a house of brick and stone
to live in
and will be as weather-proof
as time. There is

time enough
for hard living, I came to this city
to see the world, this moving train

soothing
me sleepy.

SHOREBOUND, THIS SHELL

Annamaria Weldon

is a tinkling at tideline
is out of its element
is misplaced memory
is hollowed by past fullness
is engraved with its journey

on its own this shell

is a blade underfoot
is a heartbeat missed
is without voice or song
is a flightless wing
is only half the story.

HOW TO BE

S.E. Salvidge

Step 1: Being Born

There were a range of bureaucratic steps that facilitated my passage into life.

For a start, there were a great many forms to be filled in the waiting room where my mother sat to confirm her pregnancy. This time could have been cut down quite a bit if she had chosen to see the same doctor regularly, but by this stage of the Eighties she'd acquired a whole range of doctors for different ailments and wasn't about to let them get mixed up now. Anyway, she never minded paperwork, and it wasn't like she was going to flick through the women's dailies for distraction. She just wasn't that kind of woman.

Once my existence had been confirmed and reconfirmed and all necessary medical provider forms signed on the dotted line, there were other questions to be resolved by the careful reading and rereading of a range of pamphlets and fact sheets. Abortion? No abortion? It was a difficult question with real pros and cons on both sides.

An abortion would be cheaper in the long run, and mum wouldn't have to go through all the indignities of pregnancy again. She would be better placed to get into the workforce sooner if there was no second child, and this mattered, as the thought of life under a single ordinary

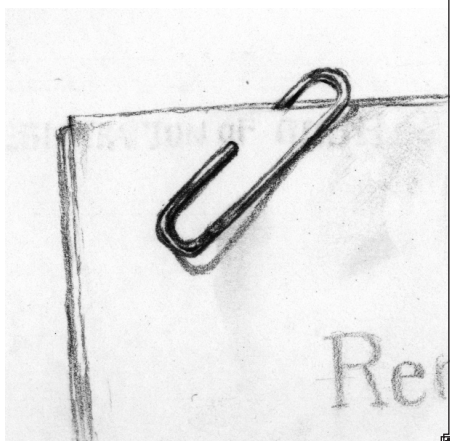
income under Thatcher was not a nice one.

On the other hand, surely my baby brother could use the company, and so could Granny. And anyway now that IT was there, maybe IT should just be left to do its thing?

Ultimately inertia won the day, and I was left to run my course from fish thing to fist thing to foetal thing.

Nine months of backaches, headaches and general aches barely covered by Panadol and tea on the hour and I was finally due. It took far more than just an arbitrary time frame to get me out though, and I forced those around me to cajole and coddle me into my own separate existence.

I was late, always late, and I felt sorry for Diane even then as she tried to usher me out into the fresh air. I wouldn't budge. Instead I lay, big, bigger,



biggest. Waiting, hiding, scheming, already planning a way to avoid my responsibilities, foreboding all the hurt and spite and shame that would come. It was only the doctor's incision, another's act against my will that brought me into being, a fat and aggrieved being.

Diane was tired when she awoke after the incident, and remained so for the next twenty years.

There was more paperwork to be done.

MONEY POEM

Shultz Marshall

I'm living, breathing money
I pays me – myself.
And we spend heedless
Of our declining/swelling stocks.

I'm fluid, in all forms
And I'll break my back
In a moment, no-thinking
To earn me another...
To grab a little more of me.

HERE'S TROUBLE

Matthew Giles

I told you, Christine, the
beast came through the barricade fast
as lightning, splashing spit from
its mouth all over us. Johnny
reacted first, threw himself at it
ripped to shreds
Betty yelled and fired her
eye beams. It took
her next, by the back
of her head. I dropped a
car on it from a very
great height and caved
in its exoskeleton. Then
Billy burned it. That's when
you showed up. I'm
so sorry, Christine.

VIOLENCE AND MILEAGE

Mathas

Lets call this inspired syllabus,
echo bounced off four walls,
planetary pain relief chasing time and its flawed course.
Violence and mileage,
the new hybrid lifestyle,
ended hands across America but bound its allies.
West Aus, watching bitter, best view from the side lines,
as we march together,
arm in arm as brothers whether,
the cause weathers the storm or sets fire to its birth place,
when fear is endorsed with a fat yellow smiley face.
And that logo used to endorse the green smoke spokesman,
used to dingy round propeller blades in open ocean,
so harpoon nooses missed the target,
split the market asking,
is the blubber trade up on noah's ark glory basking.
Or marking up their numbers two heads per species,
two cookies from the jar,
6 feet beneath the sea.
Burn the rubble,
eradicate the archives,
bubble up the media plus saddle up the counter strike.
Then mic 'em with an arsenal of tabloid voyeurs,
hope the hot pokers milk a keen tale for all its worth.
Put five stars next to a violent picture
and the promo sell it quicker when you glorify the mixture.
Them cameras snap a tasty sale off genocide,
typewriters make way for digitally hybridized life,
in violence and mileage,
picking the right fights,
while still picketing peace in the TV corner on the right.

Poking at the activists

pope bobbing for apples,
in this joke cracking internet trade of hacked facts,
and every pacifist screeching black and blue,
like who put the evil in the steeples of truth we're teaching youth?

But you and I both know this aint all that new,
history's ground rules,
judge cane the gammel,
a coven of witch hit the pitch in a pile of ash and coal,
towns-people curse out the sins of trained souls.

Man.. fickle.

Shit, pistol-whip the wise of old,
put that pistol up the nose of all whose blood run cold,
whether born chief of skies, reptile or UFO,
put your pocket change heavy on the facts only you know.

You're my safety blanket.

You're my beneficiary.

You're my saving grace at the end of the last century.

You're my golden wristwatch that keeps time ticking,
when this planetary pacemaker's flicking on and off.

Like 2012 right?

That's what they're telling me,

We go rustic!

An outsiders view,

we stay agnostic.

Getting sleepy on that constant underdog outfoxed,
by the top cats faking dead flocks in their ballot box.

Poking at the activists,
pope bobbing for apples,
in this joke cracking internet trade of hacked facts,
and every pacifist screeching black and blue,
like who put the evil in the steeples of truth we're teaching youth?

Now.. I dunno.

Just putting this one out there but..

Maybe YOU did?

CONTROLLED WRITER

Geoff Parsons

I ran into Julianne on the street. I saluted her with my hot dog. She is a vegetarian. Anyway, at work I had asked her out the day before and was turned down. I walked home and got an OE. I ran into Andy.

"You alright man?" he said, reading the dream of rejection on my face.

"No. I got shot down by that girl at work."

"That sucks. I've been really stressed myself lately," he said, producing a prescription bottle from his pocket.

"What's that, Andy?"

"Benzodiazepine."

"Nice." Andy and I have spoken about benzo's before. For months I was on Ativan after a heavy drinking binge last year.

"It's okay," he says. I offered him a smoke. My OE was hidden in my coat.

"I got something for the stress too. Christmas time, you know?"

He shook his head. Evidently he did and does know what I meant.

"Well, you want to come over?" I asked him. We were a block away from my house. He did. I put on some TV and told Andy he could make some bacon and eggs if he was hungry. He then asked me if I was sure several times. "YES!" I told him, "don't worry." He proceeded to ask questions about how to cook them: what

temperature did I cook eggs at? And then the same for bacon and if he could use some toilet paper to soak up the fat from it.

"Have you taken those pills yet today Andy, you seem pretty out of it," I asked, swilling the OE. It was 12 o'clock and I felt real low class. I told Andy that he should eat at the table. He had sat down on my bed to eat.

"People are fucking idiots Andy. Fuck! Some guy at work says that Henry Miller is misogynistic. Or like a lot of artists that are misogynistic, or at least called misogynistic. I don't hate women. I don't think I hate women. I do not want to be a woman hater."

"Maybe it is something out of your control?" murmured Andy.

"Andy, I don't buy that shit. I can control it! That's what being human is all about, CONTROL!" and I finished off my bottle.

"Look Geoff, let's go down town where people are."

"Fuck Andy, okay, but we have to hit the LC first!"

We trudged up Gorge Road. We talk about how Victorians have no idea how to deal with snow. I call Victorians CUNTS several times. We get to the LC and I buy another 4oz. of OE.

"You know, Andy, I told myself I was

not going to drink. But then I saw that girl and I just felt my chest tighten up. I had to drink man.”

“I know the feeling,” said Andy.

Walking down Blanchard towards downtown we stop off at a parkade to drink. I take a piss on some needles that the junkies have left out for us and the kids. We go to the top level to drink.

“I always get a weird nostalgic feeling drinking in parking lots. I am almost 25 you know. I got to act my age. I got to let go of some of this shit I’m holding on to. I got to forget about all this adolescent shit, you know?”

We sit against a wall and drink on the bottle. Andy pops his pills he got from his shrink.

“You know, Andy this would make a great scene in a movie, you know? Fuck man, I got so much in me. I think I am a genius sometimes but sometimes I think I am a worthless shit, you know? Confidence is the key man, you know? All those famous fucks like Christina Aguilera and Justin Timberlake and Leonardo DiCaprio

– they’re my age, you know? Fuck, and they’re living, man!”

“Money does not buy you happiness. I know a lot of rich people that throw their lives away on booze and drugs.”

“Yeah, but they got the money to go to rehab every 2 months if they want. Keith Richards gets his blood changed every six months, man! Money affords comforts affords happiness.”

There was a pause in the conversation and I got up and went over to a snow bank and started to pitch snow balls at the wall.

“I was never good at baseball, Andy,” I said. I was thinking I was being profound.

“Yeah, me neither,” said Andy, packing a snow ball and winding up... The pitch! People knocking them out of the park on our weak-ass malnutrition arms and all.

“I get so depressed...” said Andy, going back to the bottle.

“You have the luxury of being depressed. You have to do something with your time. People



in Africa are never depressed, because they are always looking for their next meal.”

“Drunken words of wisdom” said Andy.

We walked from the parking lot down town to the library where we sat and checked emails and I sent a short story, a flash fiction piece of mine. I said ‘FLASH FICTION’ seven or eight times really loud so the girl behind us could hear. She looked like an art student.

From there Andy tried to leave to Bickrum Yoga, his only saving grace, but I stole a bottle of whiskey and we go down to the waterfront and rap badly for hours until the security guards come and make us leave.

I tried to steal a bottle of wine and ended up with an assault charge and a resisting arrest charge... spent the night in jail. One of the conditions now is that I am not allowed to associate with Andy.

DISSENT UNEXPRESSED IS NOT DISSENT AT ALL

Mathas

I could smell it on him,
He entered the apartment complex
with the stench
of wanting a “conversation” about the relationship.
He’d start with that cordial democratic sentiment
then gather momentum

and there’d be a harsh gloom all around
by the time the night was done.

Who was I to allow this?

I quickly poured him a whiskey
to dispel the tension he’d forced
I turned on the television, sat him down,
guided the glass to his lips.
It was easy from there.

Smiling when he began sentences,
soft touch, soothing,
talking him down from the ledge,
back to the comfort of the sheets;
reaffirmation through shared body heat.

He lost his nerve completely
after the first kiss.

DIABLO INTRA

James Donkin

In some of the darkest of times
he wanders with the devil in his voice.
He is angry, frustrated, wanting it to end.

Finish it, end it, complete it, get out.

He wanders the darkest hours.
Here, here he snaps.
He can no longer restrain the beast that

spurs him on to go, run, 'free' him from within.

It is what is meant to be, the hour darkly.
But the man who feels so much hurt turns,
banishing the awful from himself.

He is not to be this creature.
He is not this creature.
He is of so much more.

He — the other he — he loves you.
He cares , is here for that reason.

A MIX LIKE GLUE

Allison C. Browning

You get part A and part B and you mix 'em together and they make stuff that can fix anything!

We couldda been like Araldite baby. But ya see, shit don't work when Part A is squirting itself all over the place like some rain shower in heaven, and that little tube of Part B is sittin' there with it's legs all crossed wonderin' how much to add to the whole darned messed up mix.

Maybe I got a faulty one with you. Maybe that tube just got old.

Once upon a time, somehow when those two tubes mixed- they mixed up the best stuff to fix it all.

When I felt like some worn out shoe, that little blend would make me all mended. Good as new.

Jesus baby, I stubbed myself over and over on those lane way stones, but I could stomp around that city knowing I had mix to cure it all!

I'm still knocking about on those cobbled stones, but no mix. You'd think an old shoe like me would know better. That aged leather oughtta know that blue stone just don't give.

THE EAGLE GRABBED THE BABY

Matthew Giles

The eagle grabbed the baby
by its head, talons flanked by unformed
candy sponge
and lifted from one domain to another
only one feather jostled out of place
falling like a quill in a production company credit
against the blue of the sky and black
of eagle and baby's silhouette
The only other object was a bit of blood
perched on the breeze in the shape of a question mark
Nothing else, not even the wail

of the baby, too far gone, too quickly
into the neighbour's yard

THE OLD RHYME OF THE ANIKUK TREE AND THE FOURTEEN TKLFUT WARRIORS

Kirk Marshall

There is a people of immense innovation on a continent of tiny relevance. These people are lithe and brutal, with thoughts as quick as the advent of snow, and lusts as sordid and unsacrosanct as those of scorpion and leopard, and there it is considered venerated wisdom to speak little and exact the prurient and purposeful artifice of becoming a warrior. It is on this heretofore unsung and entirely disregardable continent, as the sough and transition of phoenix-gold sands shift, undulate and recede, that the fourteen Tklfut men, those of tribal belligerence and reef-green eyes, fjorded through the arduous caprices of the liquorice-hot summer season to steel themselves for the centennial Anikuk bloom. The Anikuk is a tree much like the lilac, with branches as majestic and interminable and brilliant as any a particularly fanciful mind might conjure, and it is these branches, dependable, bereft of the sully by human matriculation or craft, of this Anikuk tree, mighty, resolute, a lodestone extruding from the earth and siphoning moisture from the most enriched, pear-brown soil beneath it, that the fourteen men of the Tklfut clan will scale, will claim for their respective valour and sovereignty, so that one of the fourteen

will succeed in capturing the Anikuk flower for which generational scripture and oral storytelling has professed to blossom once every hundred years. The man whom achieves this end, procures the Anikuk bloom, will be recognised and valorised as his clan's new leader, and thus it has been for centuries that the system of governance for the Tklfut is that of electing he who is deposed of the most fortitude and intellect, just as every strong, patriotic and dignified nation elects their leader in a like fashion. This new leader of the Tklfut will be perceived as an emissary for the way the clan must evolve to ensure its technological advance and social efficiency, and so it is this man to whom the world is but a surf-blue dream to be tapped and harnessed, a man to whom smoke is a blade demanding to be wielded and imagination is an arrow endowed with the swiftness to pierce the starry firmament, a man to whom knowledge and power are fruits to be devoured and cultivated so that the viscid scarlet juice of victory stains each man, woman and child's teeth and tongues.

The tongues of the Tklfut are rampant and sharp, quick-witted as that of a harried fleet of silver fox, and this prosperity in scaling the Anikuk tree so as to secure its century-protracted

blossom is writ large in the winning smiles of the supple, hardened warriors to whom the challenge entices and cajoles. Thus, it is this non-particular year in the itinerant, savannah-trawling ways of the Tklfut that it be Flortina Sppluss, he of the vast shoulders, intrepid stature and laugh as red as wrist-deep ochre, whom the Anikuk tree will relent its flower to; he knows this because he is inspired by the virtuoso gift of foresight, and such a prevailing and munificent talent had been channelled to prevent a clan hutment from catching fire, had been eschewn so as to predict the arrival of the monsoon season, and had been demonstrated when communing with a battered pride of lions so as to trick them of their trophy catches of gazelle. Flortina Sppluss's epical and transcendent gift had never been proven incorrect; so it was that he understood the fate of the Anikuk tree's bloom to be predetermined to involve his success as close and inextricably as the fate of the swallow is dependent upon the safety of the nest. Flortina Sppluss readied himself, then, with inexorable fervour for the task, occupying the dissolute and fading nights, nights as tempered and vaporous as plumes of sulphur steam, occupying these nights with unplumbed and studied meditation, conversing with the maribou stork and the carraway beetle, provoking himself to practice manouevering, ascending and scuttling down the bows of sycamores and the

leathered sinew of balboas, until Flortina was quite certain of his imminent victory. After these transitory, moth-winged days of dedicated, industrious preparation and with his corporeal form composed of the agonising, pugilistic aches of a man wishing to be a god, Flortina Sppluss fell into a dark, immersive slumber of wordless fractal dreams, inhaling the merry incantatory laughter of the stars overhead and breathing out the song of a hero wresting, grappling to be born.

He awoke to the day of the Anikuk bloom with vitriol and gamble, a sorcery of glow-leeches goosepimpling his flesh: Flortina Sppluss was now earnest and focused to achieving his clan's hundred-years ceremony of besting his Tklfut ancestors, and therefore claiming dignified hold onto his flourishing manhood.

The Anikuk tree was not an easy tree to climb; its limbs were entwined preternaturally close and these could not bear a great deal of weight subjected to their surface, -- and as the tree exploded into canopy at its apex and branches protruding from the centre became fewer, so that to reach the Anikuk's pinnacle you had to stretch yourself as limp and pendulous as was plausible, with feet splayed and hands steepled, fingers groping for the uppermost network of branches, -- and it was in this position, as Flortina Sppluss most accurately and unabashedly resembled a squirrel

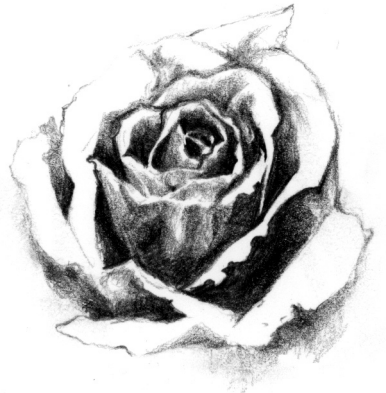
glider whilst swearing and sweating profusely, that the Anikuk tree broke into a lilting, effulgent laughter heard by Flortina and the other thirteen warriors of Tklfut, releasing its bloom directly above Flortina's gaze; but releasing then another, and another, until the tree's entire canopy was replete, fat with silver, conch-shaped flowers that dazzled and wheeled and shed as though celestial tears within the virtuoso song of the wind's blade. The Anikuk tree had never provided so many flowers in the long and religious custodianship as instigated by the Tklfut people, and never before had it looked so mighty, so splendid and heartstaggeringly gorgeous as it did in that orchestrated, musical moment wherein the Anikuk blazed with the white-hot bounty of a thousand flowers and rained these upon the countenances of the Tklfut, its petals evaporating as though chocolate speccles, or pieces of the host onto the victorious tongues of those winning smiles.

But this is not a joyous story and it did not conclude like this. Flortina Sppluss was angry, as were the thirteen warriors: how dare the tree make such a travesty of their generational ceremony, how dare it stoke their wrath by mocking their zeal and devotion by bearing its one thousand blooms?

The Tklfut people murdered the Anikuk tree and distorted its wood to lumber. The firefly flowers that caught in

the people's hair like screed-true confetti were washed out and made scarlet by the blood of the lions that the Tklfut maimed and hunted to assuage the memory of that loathsome and uncanny time of soured sorrow.

A child from the clan asked his mother if the Anikuk tree had simply wished to provide for all. The sentiments his mother espoused were incorporated as a creed for the clan: the Anikuk tree was only really beautiful when it was ours... when it was tame... when there was an understanding of how we had to use it.



ULTRASOUND

Annamaria Weldon

Rim dwellers, diviners of the abyss,
you scan spaces between sighs,
ventricular vowels and
quiet consonants.

Foetal heart whisperers who whet
bladed shadows, pronouncing your
magician promises, seers of sharp edges
submarine, warnings word-soft as
water lapped beaches forbidding us
to swim offshore where ocean breathes.

Your element is neither earth
nor water, your imprints tidal
wavelines, sand traced,
your hope, transient.

OPERATION SUPERMARKET

Vivienne Glance

Aisles assault my senses
colours and shapes and patterns all
standing to attention or tumbling
into baskets.

The army of marketeers has
assessed and assayed my
senses divined my
neuroses and pigeon holed my
personality -
I walk statistics
data covered in flesh I feed
back into the loop
and my actions
are not my own.

In the queue
you are fresh
and plump
with new woman awakening.
Skin powder soft
your bare summer shoulders
beckon nervous
caresses from untried hands.
You fill this temple to excess
with your fertility
and expectation
I stand behind your joyful chatter
like the reaper.

I hold
desperate seeds
if I plant them in my mouth

they will sprout an invasive weed
strangle your future beauty.

You are wrapped in a bodice
of your own indulgence.

You deny your inner
sense that should prick
up your ears
like a mouse
sensing a cat.

I have paid
attention to warnings
of despairing prophets
who cannot pull you away
from your nail polish selection
or first date expectation
their sombre cries
shut out like the radiating sun.

I have heard them scream their warnings.

Are you listening?
Can you hear?

CONTRIBUTORS

Ellen Broad is 20 and living in Paris. She is usually studying in Perth but I now just sleeping in a foreign city and eating.

Allison C. Browning is a writer, actor and musician. Sometimes she writes under the guise of ‘beauty expert’, other times artistically and in the best of times – just to have adventures. She now lives in Melbourne. Find her online at either jemimaisnotmyname.blogspot.com or myspace.com/allisonbrowning.

James Donkin is a student living in Perth. His photographic work has been shortlisted in state photographic competitions and has appeared in *MoTHER [has words...]*.

Matthew Giles is a freelance journalist, small publisher, editor, record label owner and student of Communication and Cultural Studies at Curtin University, majoring in creative writing. This year marks his first serious attempts at fiction and poetry, constituted by his story published in *First Page* and the poems contained in this zine. *First Page* is the second book he has helped release after *The Love is My Velocity Cookbook* in 2007, which should be joined by a sequel in 2009.

Vivienne Glance writes for page and stage: plays – poems – short stories. Some poems are published, others are performed. She regularly runs workshops for wordsmiths. WA State Slam winner, 3rd in the National Slam Final, Vivienne recently performed in Sydney in March as part of Night Words Spoken Word Festival.

Matthew Jones writes poetry, and other things, but mainly poetry. He continually uses music as inspiration; artists like Augie March, Elliott Smith, Leonard Cohen and Tom Waits can serve as soundtracks for his poems. Matthew would like to be Dylan Thomas, or, failing that, Dylan Moran.

Kirk A. Marshall is a Brisbane-borne writer, freelance illustrator, independent filmmaker and mobilized environmentalist relocated to Melbourne, by way of Kanagawa-ken. He has recently self-published and distributed, *A Solution to Economic Depression in Little Tokyo, 1953*, a 2007 Aurealis Award-nominated full-colour illustrated graphic novelette. Kirk edits the forthcoming international English-language / Japanese bi-lingual literary journal, *Red Leaves / 紅葉*, and his up-to-date online weblog can be accessed at fun-with-kites.livejournal.com.

Shultz Marshall sometimes writes stuff in an effort to remember being there, and to remind folks that he was. He then leaves these remembering things strewn through notebooks.

Mathas has been here for 24 years. Up until a month or so ago, he'd lived in the same house my entire life. He's never broken any bones and has two impressive parents. Now he pushes cappuccinos down people's throats, squishes syllables into 4/4 and take the piss out of things. He runs The Community with fellow community music kids. He's try to be nice to everybody because there isn't enough circumstantial evidence put forward in daily interaction to judge one's perspective... and his third eye doesn't work yet. Check him out at myspace.com/mathasquatch or at myspace.com/thecomunityperth.

Geoff Parsons is a writer living in Victoria.

S.E Salvidge is a reluctant semi-professional living in Brunswick, Melbourne. She is a Curtin Fine Arts graduate and frequently returns to Perth to see her mum and to marvel at how expensive everything has gotten.

Annamaria Weldon is multi-lingual, most fluent in poetry, was born Maltese, walked the plazas and markets of many lands, made WA home. Once a reporter, now writes verse and fiction for anthologies and journals; loves spoken word, wants to record *The Roof Milkers*, her new collection just published by Sunline Press.

Thanks to the Cottonmouth committee

They are Rebecca Giggs, Patrick Pittman, Scott-Patrick Mitchell, Simon Cox, Jessyca Hutchens, Tomás Ford and Matt Ford.

Our posters and other beautiful (and occasionally creepy) accoutrements were designed by Michael Barlow Stringer.

We're in the 459 Bar of the Rosemount Hotel on the second Thursday of every month. (Except this month, which is a Wednesday, same as last month, we know, but there was drum and bass next door on Thursday and, y'know, it's hard to synchronise spoken word with *that* kind of bpm), 459 Fitzgerald St, North Perth, Western Australia.

You may visit us online at cottonmouth.org.au

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