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THESE THINGS ARE REAL

Alan Wearne

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Alan Wearne specialises in monologues and verse narratives. A young widow in post-war Melbourne fends off the approaches of her best friend's husband; a retired femocrat recalls her lovelorn Maoist past; a single mother falls into an abusive relationship with a drifting musician; a heroin addict is haunted by his dealer's murder of a youth. Also included here is 'The Sarsaparilla Writers Centre', a collection of satires on music, football, religion, politics, and poets.

Alan Wearne's verse novels *The Nightmarkets* and *The Lovemakers* and his collections *The Australian Popular Songbook* and *Prepare the Cabin for Landing* won the National Book Council Banjo Award, the NSW Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry and NSW Premier's Book of the Year Award, the Judith Wright Calanthe Award, the Grace Leven Prize and the Colin Roderick Award. He is the publisher of Grand Parade Poets.

Alan Wearne's poems coruscate with their brio. As they unfold, they mint the music and good cheer from resources as broad as the rhyming élan of Kipling, Newbolt or C.J. Dennis, to the street argot his extraordinarily ready ear might have overheard a moment ago. But always they communicate the enjoyment he takes in their composition, a poetry that delights as much in being at the up-front of how lives are lived and spoken, as it joys in how serviceable is the substance poetry itself to make that up-front vibrant and just. – Alan Gould



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Author's note

Yes poetry is an elitist pursuit, since not everyone can write it, nor can everyone read and enjoy it. Yet it is still the most democratic, maybe even anarchic of the written/spoken arts. Rarely beholden to any writers centre/ book club/festival/market place, we truly can write as we please, and if readers have to meet us some of the way and adjust...so be it. They can be assured that these things I write of in the 'Five Verse Narratives' of my *These Things are Real* are indeed real: the damaged busker and the even more potent damage he causes; the reserved gay engineer and his assembly of warm-hearted friends; the love-lorn young lesbian Maoist; the acerbic 1950s widow and the dysfunctional couple she befriends; the well-educated junkie near-mesmerised by his dealer. Stories quite often out of a one-time Australia? Maybe, though still tales that I trust can resonate, for people will always love and nurture, hate and abuse, become obsessed, become addicted.

And if such are the constants what of the here-and-now? Well that's where the satirist arrives, for if all eras need their satirical corrective, this era is bellowing out for such, in Australia and throughout the globe. Which I hope is where the 'The Sarsaparilla Writers Centre' of my present book comes barging in. Sure we can take shots at this brute in the Kremlin, that slob in the White House, those ditherers hovering about 10 Downing Street, but in a garden that has produced Abbott, Dutton, Hanson and Pell (for starters!) I think we should take to spraying our own weeds first. And those elitists, the poets, are just the folk for the job!

Alan Wearne