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## Behind the Scenes...

Hi all,

Our next major celebration will be the launch of our fifth anthology *Category 5*, at Havana Music Café. Mayor Val Schier will again be in attendance to help us celebrate the launching our book. Tropical Writers will provide nibbles and drinks can be purchased from the licensed bar. Please invite your friends, relatives and neighbours ... particularly the ones who will buy a book so we can fund our next anthology. There will be a special '**Launch Sale**' price on our new book; it will sell for \$15.00 at the launch, which is well below the retail price. We will also offer two books (our new anthology and a previously published anthology) for the sale price of \$25.00.

Thank you in advance to those at the launch who will read their poem or an extract from the book. It will help whet the literary appetite of our guests.

2011 has been a very successful year for Tropical Writers. Many of our members have won awards, published their own books or been included in variety of publications. Other members are happy to come along to meetings and be a part of a group that shares their interest in the craft of writing.

Our December meeting is traditionally a *fun* gathering where we share Christmas poems and short stories and put the *Subs* towards pizza. Please bring along your Christmas haiku or a Christmas story to read.

Attached you will find this year's Members Questionnaire. This is so those of you who were not at Saturday's meeting can also give feedback, ideas and suggestions on the running of our group. Please email your response to Carol before the end of November [carol.libke@aanet.com.au](mailto:carol.libke@aanet.com.au).

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all members a very Merry Christmas and a happy and successful new year.

Yours in writing,

*Carol Libke*  
(President)

PS: Membership Fees for 2012 will remain unchanged (\$35 per annum), plus \$5 monthly meeting fee to cover venue hire, tea/coffee and an afternoon snack.

## Tropical Writers Questionnaire

The committee has added a few new questions this year and given you the opportunity to add your own comments and suggestions.

The idea is to collate the responses so that we have a clear understanding of the needs of the group in readiness for our AGM in February.

With your help, the committee will formulate a time-saving agenda for the AGM, which will see us vote and move into 2012 with a clear mandate for another successful year.

Members who collected a hard-copy at the meeting can return them at the December meeting.

We have attached an electronic version with this newsletter, so everyone can participate in this important survey.

In order to vote at the AGM you will need to be a paid-up member of the group.



## Tips on Tenses

Verbs show action and the time when the action took place. These different times are called 'tenses'.

The principal tenses are: present, simple past, past perfect, past pluperfect, simple future, future and pluperfect future.

Continuous tenses (-ing endings) show action occurring at the specific moment e.g. I am eating now. He was reading when the light went out. Present continuous can also be used to show future tense in spoken English e.g. I am going to town tomorrow.

### Examples:

Present Tense: I visit Cairns every month.

Present Continuous: I am writing a letter now.

Simple future: I will visit Cairns next week.

Future perfect: He will have finished the job before the end of the week.

Future Continuous: I will be waiting at the bus stop when you arrive.

Simple Past: I saw him yesterday

Past Continuous: She was talking to him when the accident happened.

Present Perfect: I have written the letter (and here it is).

Past Perfect: I had finished the letter before the phone rang.

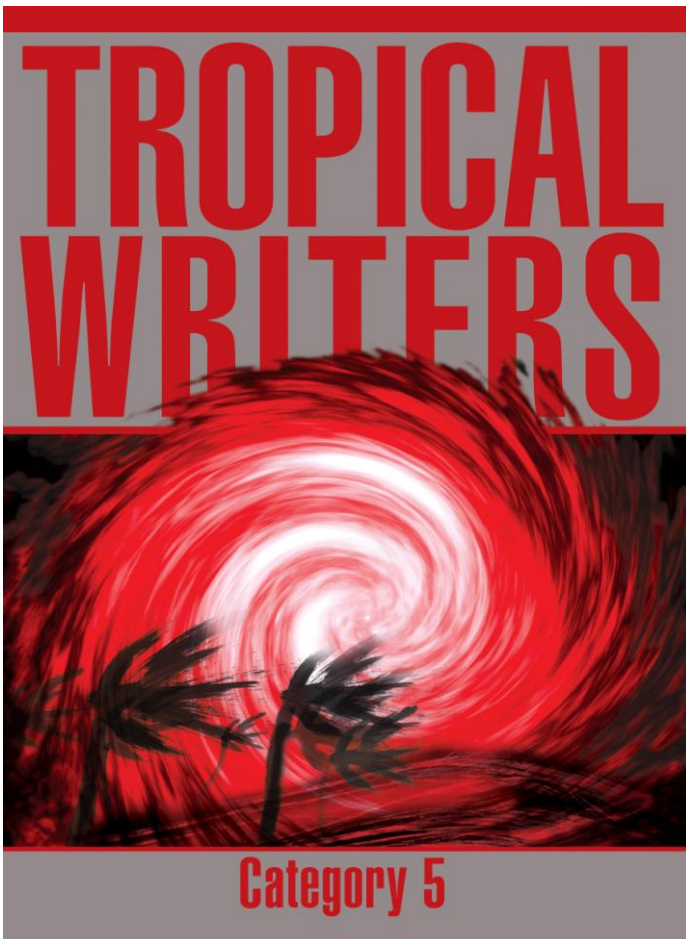
### Do you confuse these words?

#### Who Vs Whom:

Use **who** when you would use he, she or they.  
This is the woman who asked for the report.

Use **whom** when you would use him, her or them.  
This is the man of whom I have spoken. (I have spoken of him)

## Tropical Writers Anthology Launch



All tropical writers and their families and friends are invited to attend the most exciting event of the year – ***the launch of Category 5!***

**Where:** Havana's Music Cafe  
**When:** Saturday, 19 November 2011  
**Time:** 3:00pm - 5:00pm

**Nibbles provided. Drinks available from the licensed bar.**

We hope to sell as many copies of this book as we can, so please help us promote this book. If we sell enough books, we'll be able to afford to publish another anthology next year!

## Upcoming Events

**Tropical Writers Next Meeting Date**  
 Saturday, **Dec. 3** at La Porchetta,  
 Grafton St., Cairns, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**Tropical Writers will be featured on ABC Far North Radio**  
 Carol Libke, Nika Soymonoff, Christine Vernon and Julia Driscoll will promote our book launch by reading from our book.  
**When:** 19 November, 2011  
**Time:** 7:00 a.m.

**Tropical Writers Book Launch**  
**When:** 19 November, 2011  
**Where:** Havanas Music Café  
 113 Lake St.  
**Time:** 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Book Signing – Congrats Elizabeth!**  
 Elizabeth Martin will sign copies of her book, *The Coffeeholic and the Cafe*  
**When:** 30 November 2011  
**Where:** Petrarch's Bookshop,  
 89 Brisbane Street, Launceston

## Editor's Corner\*

Welcome to the Editor's Corner. Each month I will give you two sentences that require an editor's red pen. Test your editing skills by correcting the sentence. If you need a little help, scroll down to the end of the newsletter and look for the answer in the box titled, Editor's Mark.

Here are your two sentences:

1. Calmly munching oats in the stable, Barbara finally discovered her runaway horse.
2. There was a piano for sale by a music teacher with carved Queen Anne legs.

## Writers on Writing

by Carol Libke

The purpose of this column is to offer tips and advice from writers on writing. This month I bring you words of wisdom from successful writers across the ages.

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.

- **Douglas Adams**

Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret.

- **Matthew Arnold**

Plotting is like sex. Plotting is about desire and satisfaction, anticipation and release. You have to arouse your reader's desire to know what happens, to unravel the mystery, to see good triumph. You have to sustain it, keep it warm, feed it, just a little bit, not too much at a time, as your story goes on. That's called suspense. It can bring desire to a frenzy, in which case you are in a good position to bring off a wonderful climax.

- **Colin Greenland**

Use your imagination. Trust me, your lives are not interesting. Don't write them down.

- **W. B. Kinsella**

We do not write because we want to; we write because we have to.

- **Somerset Maugham**

Pay no attention to what the critics say; no statue has ever been erected to a critic.

- **Jean Sibelius**

One writes such a story [The Lord of the Rings] not out of the leaves of trees still to be observed, nor by means of botany and soil-science; but it grows like a seed in the dark out of the leaf-mold of the mind: out of all that has been seen or thought or read, that has long ago been forgotten, descending into the deeps. No doubt there is much personal selection, as with a gardener: what one throws on one's personal compost-heap; and my mold is evidently made largely of linguistic matter.

- **J. R. R. Tolkien**

The measure of artistic merit is the length to which a writer is willing to go in following his own compulsions.

- **John Updike**

As for the adjective, when in doubt leave it out.

- **Mark Twain**

An essential element for good writing is a good ear: One must listen to the sound of one's own prose.

- **Barbara Tuchman**

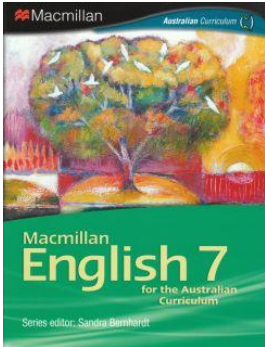
The first chapter sells the book; the last chapter sells the next book.

- **Mickey Spillane**

And as imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothings a local habitation and a name.

- **William Shakespeare**

## Introducing ... Tropical Writer and Science Poet Celia Berrell



Tropical Writer Celia Berrell is gaining notoriety in science and education with her *Science Rhymes*. CSIRO's *Scientriffic* magazine published her poem, **Snow Crystals** in their July-August 2011 edition.

Recently Celia's poem, **The beauty of it all**, was published in **Macmillan English 7**, a textbook for Australian secondary students. This poem was used as an exercise to help students understand how poetry can be used to inform science and art. The poem was printed alongside an art painting titled, *Called Away* by Sharon Davson. Students were asked to interpret the poem, in relation to the painting, by being asked some rather challenging questions (see below).

"Since starting *Science Rhymes* it has been my dream that these poems are published as an educational tool," said Celia. "And it is certainly a great honour to know that 'The beauty of it all' will be read and scrutinised by students!"

### *The beauty of it all*

All we can touch, and all we see  
Began in cosmic history.  
How long ago, came things to be?  
Perhaps it was infinity.

All our surroundings hold in  
store  
The clues to what has gone  
before.  
A fascination long prevails  
To understand time's every tale.

Our tiny earth holds precious  
gifts  
As through the universe it drifts.  
With organisms varied, rife.  
Are we alone in having Life?

This special form of energy  
Enduring in its frailty.  
Bestows such beauty, all  
admired.  
Intelligence is awe-inspired.



### From the Macmillan English 7 textbook:

#### Poetry and science

At first glance, poetry and science seem to be very different things. However, they do have a close connection, because both depend on the human imagination. Scientists need imagination to wonder and ask questions, while poets and readers need imagination to capture and understand their visions of life.

#### Science words in a poem

The poem 'The beauty of it all' contains several words from the world of science. Read it and look at the painting that inspired it, *Called Away*, then complete Exercise 12.1.

#### Exercise 12.1 Unpacking 'The beauty of it all'

- 1 What does 'it' in the title of the poem refer to? What then is the poem about?
- 2 What two questions does the poet ask? Does she answer either of them?
- 3 What do you see when you look at the painting *Called Away*? What connections can you make between the poem and the painting? Are the poem and the painting saying the same thing? Explain in a short paragraph.
- 4 How does the title help you interpret the painting?

## Writing and Stuff

By Ken Cotterill

### A Writing Exercise

Many writing groups give their members a writing exercise to complete each month.

This practice gives new writers a focus (something to write about), and the opportunity to get in the habit of writing regularly. For advanced writers, these exercises can inspire new ideas and new skills.

Tropical Writers will trial this practice for a few months to see if members find it useful, fun or helpful.

Of course you are under no obligation to complete this assignment, but if you want to give it a go, we'd love to hear your effort at our next meeting or on the forum.

This month, begin your 500 word story with the following phrase:

**The bus driver was whistling, perhaps in anticipation of...**

### Dialogue

Many writers have problems with dialogue. Even the rich and famous often fudge their inadequacies, and have never mastered the art. And art it is.

One of the enemies of convincing dialogue is, surprisingly, punctuation. Listen to people speak. Sentence structure goes awry, words get mangled, verbs and adjectives appear in the wrong place, and full stops and commas disappear altogether. These characteristics appear as much in the educated as the uneducated. Generally, people talk differently from how they write and think. So, when writing dialogue be aware that dialogue in a story does not have to consist of perfect sentence structure and punctuation.

Different accents can also play a part in the structure of your dialogue. Be careful not to make it too incomprehensible. For example, D.H Lawrence gives his gamekeeper character Mellors, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, an occasional heavy North Derbyshire accent. The gamekeeper's words are very hard to understand, even when read repeatedly.

As a playwright I often do a test on my scripts. I cover up the names of the characters on the left of the page with a sheet of paper, and then read the dialogue. I should know which character is speaking just by reading the dialogue. One character might speak in short, sharp sentences. Another may ramble. Another might pause frequently before speaking or use one word answers. Others might speak for several sentences, but say nothing, some will be succinct and to the point. Regional accents will jostle with clipped, BBC accents. The variation in dialogue all depends on the characters and the type play.

So, in summary, when writing dialogue put the punctuation book aside, listen to how people speak, make the sentence structure vary, read the dialogue aloud, ask yourself is it compelling, does the dialogue "fit" my character, and does it move the story along.

## Poetry Talk - Christmas Haiku

By Tropical Writers

**Dave Delaney**

Bearded men in red  
ring brass bells and sound of  
cheer  
cold taste from snowflakes.

Beanie, scarf, gloves, boots  
kaleidoscope of colours  
mistletoes galore.

zinc cream sand and surf  
a family bar-b-que  
Santa in the ute.

Hot westerly blows  
full of snags and beer  
Santa suit spent.

**Rob Macalister**

A summer thunder  
Tumbles swollen from the sky  
Shower of mango.

Caught in summer nets  
Splashing red schools of  
people  
Jellyfish tremble.

Mountain streams twinkle  
Ruffle brown with foaming  
head  
Roar of summer rain.

**Dawn Keith**

Sing Christmas Carols  
Snowflakes drip from  
darkened sky  
Fills hearts with joy.

**Bec McIntyre**

‘December Sweat’

Sweat drips, sunburned arms  
Flute glasses clinked poolside  
Another scorcher.

**Carol Libke**

Calypso Christmas  
Jerk turkey, black cake & rum  
Steel drum lethargy.

**Diana Messervy**

After evening storm  
Christmas Poinciana blooms  
scarlet confetti

Listening to the news  
red baubles gleam in moon  
light  
Three more soldiers die

Road steams first fat drops  
mall a frosted wonderland  
we play white Christmas

**Elizabeth Martin**

Lost Dad’s Christmas gift  
Gingerbread house roof heavy  
Collapse into white

**Nika Soymonoff**

Bankrupt cleaned-out broke  
Christmas time is for giving  
Give a gift of love

Xmas essentials  
Beer turkey ham pudding  
cake  
Xmas excesses

Merrymaking time  
Christmas family festive  
fun  
Alone down and out

Goodwill Christmas joy  
Hallelujah peace praise love  
Lonely suicide

Old St. Nicholas gave  
Gold coins for poor and  
needy  
Now stocking fillers

Whimsical snow flakes  
Frozen onto window panes  
Cyclone twisted trees

Birch elm Christmas trees  
Bare branches outlined in  
snow  
Eucalypt bush fires

## Editor's Mark

Both of the example sentences have 'dangling' phrases.

It is important to make sure that phrases are related clearly to the rest of the sentence, otherwise the sentence is ambiguous and there may be two (sometimes very funny!) possible meanings.

1. **Calmly munching oats in the stable, Barbara finally discovered her runaway horse.**

Barbara liked to munch on oats?

The correct word order for this sentence is:

**Barbara finally discovered her runaway horse calmly munching oats in the stable.**

2. **There was a piano for sale by a music teacher with carved Queen Anne legs.**

The music teacher had carved Queen Anne legs?

The correct word order for this sentence is:

**There was a piano with carved Queen Anne legs for sale by a music teacher.**

## Tropical Writers of Far North Queensland: Mission Statement

As writers we gather to support each other in our shared need to write. We learn from each other, help each other and critique each other's writing with respect. We encourage each other to reach individual goals and rejoice in each other's successes. Most of all, we nurture the creative muse in each of us and share a mutual understanding of that strange creative force that compels us to take pen to paper: In short, we gather to celebrate our individual creativity and our collective energy.

## Critique Etiquette

### Responsibilities of the Writer

Ask for feedback on the specific area of writing you want help with.

Be able to articulate what you are attempting to do and ask your readers if it works.

If possible, supply the readers with copies of the writing beforehand so that they can give considered feedback.

Respond to critique with respect.

### Responsibilities of the Reader

Only give feedback related to the specific questions asked for by the writer

Find out what the writer is trying to accomplish and direct feedback to that.

Take time and care to consider thoughtful feedback.

Give critique with respect.

## Tropical Writers of Far North Queensland

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### Tropical Writers Banking Details

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