

Australian Catholic University, Central Queensland University, Queensland University of Technology, University of Queensland, University of Southern Queensland, University of the Sunshine Coast

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Collaborative scholarly creative writing: two poems

‘Thoughts flow from mind to hands’ and ‘Coconut damper: a working recipe’

Biographical notes:

Margaret Anderson is a Home Economics teacher in Cairns and a research higher degree student at Central Queensland University.

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Chelsea Bond is a Senior Lecturer with the University of Queensland although is commencing soon at the Queensland University of Technology.

Donna Lee Brien is Professor of Creative Industries at Central Queensland University, where she Chairs the Creative and Performing Arts research group.

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Marlene Longbottom, is a Lecturer and research higher degree student at the University of Newcastle.

Anita K Milroy is a visual artist and a research higher degree student at Central Queensland University.

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Robyn Sandri is an author, consultant and casual academic at Central Queensland University.

Lynne Stuart is a research higher degree student and Lecturer in Nursing at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Ulrike Sturm is a visual artist, and an academic and a research higher degree student at Central Queensland University.

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Keywords:

Creative writing – scholarly writing – collaboration – collaborative practice – poetry



Fig 1. Ulrike Sturm *March*, 2013. Photo. Bronwyn Fredericks, 2013

Doseena Fergie, Bronwyn Fredericks, Leanne King, Chelsea Bond, Marlene Longbottom, Raelene Ward, Judy Gould, Robyn Sandri, Machellee Kosick, Patrice Harald

Thoughts flow from mind to hands

Hands – gnarled, yet robust

Does the pen write words of wisdom created from the past?

Do the pages illustrate images of sadness – life – or love?

Eager to get down all that I can in one sitting

Pen to paper

paper to pen

Ideas spill out from a jumble to order

line by line in succession.

Is it an article?

Is it a facticle?

No, it's research.

The power of text, the power of words, the power.

The author is expert, the author invisible, the author.

The knowledge created, the knowledge affirmed, the knowledge.

The slave dismantles the master's house with the master's tools.

From former studied object, to the writer and teller of our own stories.

Power exists as we move through the academy

not claiming the space,

rather our rightful position.

Creating the (writing) space, the flow of ideas, a quiet and reflective space
relaxing, meaningful, focussed;
a life well lived, imprinted in good times and bad, for eternity.

Blank page, pen poised,
Intuition, Spirit, Ancestors' knowings dictate.
Hands are tools shaping hieroglyphics.

Words? Sometimes not enough,
How can you express what and why?
Does it magically appear?

I contemplate not what to do, but thoughts grow of things to do.
I imagine and on paper I do.
And now write my thoughts from mind and can do.

**Lynne Stuart, Nayadin Persaud, Anita K Milroy, Cathie Joanna Withyman,
Donna Lee Brien, Gail Forrer, Denise Beckton, Ulrike Sturm, Nereda White,
Margaret Anderson**

Coconut damper: a working recipe

The power of the pen, etching, scratching, styling, communication laced with meaning
to pass on to generations to come.
Guided by the hand and the mind of the thought-obsessed vessel.
Out of the mind, through the hand, down the pen and forming words for time
indefinite.

Food for Freedom
Fool for Chains
Fool for Language

In my mind's eye, thoughts move and shift in technicolour.
These I try to channel, to capture and record with paper and pen.
Metamorphed (black and white), clear, stripped bare, exposed.

I hold it in my mind
I hold it in my heart
It is the story to be told, with words I can share.

I think I see a palm tree
I think I see an elephant
Coming out of the paper to me.

It is August now, the uncertain season between warmth and cold, living and dying.
But as the elephant kneels down, two legs at a time, then one huge grey body on the
earth, the certainty of her death,

position,
past lives,
is pure and absolute.

The railway tracks that line my hands with age,
Defy the pathways that connect them to, my brain,
The proof is on the page.

Finally the house is quiet and everyone is asleep. Even the dog.
Finally I have the space to begin my own work.
The clock strikes midnight.

I am safe and cocooned in my quiet space.
My mind is still and my breath is soft in contemplation.
By the sea, I see me calm, rested and content.

Coconut Damper

To successfully cook Coconut Damper in banana leaves in a convection oven, you will need:

Ingredients

4 cups SR Flour (sifted)
1 cup desiccated coconut
½ cup coconut milk
½ cup milk
2 eggs beaten
6 tbsp butter (melted)

Utensils

Large bowl
Wooden spoon
Measuring cups / spoons / jug
Baking dish
Sifter
leaves

Method

Turn oven onto 180°C.
Place banana leaves in oven and cook for 10 mins on each side and put aside.
Sift flour into bowl and add coconut.
Mix dry ingredients together.
In a measuring jug, mix both milks with eggs and melted butter.
Add wet ingredients to dry and mix thoroughly.
Knead dough for 10 mins.
Place in banana leaves.
Place in a baking tray and bake for 40–50 mins.
Cool, slice and serve with syrup.

Research statement

Research background

In August 2013, an intensive research-writing workshop, embedding Indigenous perspectives and approaches (Loban 2011), responded to imperatives to develop creative works as research outputs. Inspired by a visual artwork, two poems were collaboratively developed and performed at the workshop by the participants.

Research contribution

This activity, and these outputs, explored how visual works can inspire creative text, and how the melding of individual voices offers a dynamism that may not be achieved as a solo writer. Sharing this research technique to facilitate both individual and collaborative research writing resists the competitive nature of research evaluation/ranking (Brien 2007).

Research significance

These works were created for publication and performance by ten Aboriginal, two Torres Strait Islander and eight non-Indigenous women. This type of collaboration stands in contrast to Indigenous auto/biographical writing (Grossman 2001), and engaged Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors in a collaborative research process which has resulted in publication. This presented both challenges and opportunities to develop processes in learning, teaching and research as a collective of creative scholars (Williamson & Dalal 2007).

Works cited

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