

EDITORIAL

The eternal human desire for storytelling is what inspires this first issue of *Etchings*. Journeying into many arenas over many continents, *Etchings* is open to all writers, artists, and their audiences.

This is an international gathering of works from Australia, New Zealand, England, Canada, America, Kuwait, Greece, Austria and Switzerland.

If there is a theme to this collection, it is one reflecting the many facets of the human condition. Inside you will find exquisite characters and images: a young man obsessed with alphabetising his entire life; a singer's journey from ambitious prodigy to bar room crooner; a lightning man; an ageing literature professor lamenting his life steeped in theory and the loss of allure to young female students; the deconstruction of books and the art of moving into sculptured text; a quirky dialogue between a painting and its buyer; an answer to the question, 'How do I write a poem?'; home birthing as seen through the eyes of a seven year old boy; the bitter-sweet challenges of travelling through ancestry; the hope and failings of a marriage encapsulated in a magical word; a poignant telling of the seductiveness of chat-room romances; the essence of life held in a childhood memory of a mandarin orange; a satirising of the instant-problem-solving columns we are so familiar with; the unspoken thoughts of a migrant experience, reduced by a long-distance phone line; art created with a mobile phone camera; and much much more.

Although the focus is international, *Etchings* is equally inspired by local talent. We enter the colourful lanes of Melbourne to discover the rising and somewhat controversial art of stencil graffiti.

Stencil artist FORM invites us to share in his philosophy on the importance of stencil graffiti as a means of re-claiming city walls and of creating an urban space alternative to that controlled by advertising.

The wall, for once, not a space for billboards—nor seen as a barrier or a divider—but presented as an open forum for everyone to contribute to. FORM tells us, 'Street art is not created for anyone, it's created for everyone'. And so, too, is *Etchings*.

Welcome and enjoy!

SABINA HOPFER