

Personal Note by Keith Harrison

Though I was born and educated in Melbourne, Australia, since 1958 I've lived and worked in a number of countries, chiefly England, Canada and America. During those fifty years while living abroad I've kept in touch with my Australian roots, made many extended visits, and published and broadcast widely there, as well as in the other three countries I've mentioned. My main work has been in poetry but I've also done a good deal of translation from a number of languages and have tried my hand at versions of such poets as Virgil, Catullus, Rilke, Lorca, Pushkin, Baudelaire, Francis Jammes and others. My largest project as a translator was a verse rendition of the mediaeval poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which was first published by the Folio Society of Great Britain in 1983. It was subsequently chosen in 1998 for inclusion in the World's Classics Series of Oxford University Press.

In 1968 I was lucky enough to gain a teaching post at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota where I was Professor of English and Writer-in-residence until my retirement in 1996. Since then I've divided my time between several locations in Southern Australia, and Minneapolis.

Having read, published and broadcast my work in a number of countries, in recent times I've been turning my attention to the difficult challenge of the public performance of poetry, working in small groups, sometimes with overtone chanting and 'voice' instruments such as the didjeridu. My aim is to reach out to a larger audience and reveal some of the hidden dimension of poetry which we don't catch when we read only with the eye. In this I have been assisted and encouraged by my very old friend, Richard Hornung, former Director of the Flinders Street School of Music in Adelaide.

Besides poetry in performance I'm working on two texts – on essay writing*, and the art of versification, respectively – which I hope will be useful for student writers of prose and poetry.

*Keith will base his advanced essay writing course at Carleton on his book *How to Stop Your Papers from Killing You (and me)*. The course will be offered Fall Term 2009 in the second five-weeks.