

Westerly

Volume 63 Number 2, 2018

Notice of Intention

Westerly has converted the full backfile of Westerly (1956–) to electronic text, available to readers and researchers on the *Westerly* website, www.westerlymag.com.au. This work has been supported by a grant from the Cultural Fund of the Copyright Agency Limited.

All creative works, articles and reviews converted to electronic format will be correctly attributed and will appear as published. Copyright will remain with the authors, and the material cannot be further republished without authorial permission. *Westerly* will honour any requests to withdraw material from electronic publication. If any author does not wish their work to appear in this format, please contact *Westerly* immediately and your material will be withdrawn.

Contact: westerly@uwa.edu.au

Westerly acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Australians. We celebrate the continuous living cultures of Indigenous people and their vital contributions within Australian society.

Westerly's office, at the University of Western Australia, is located on Whadjak Noongar land. We recognise the Noongar people as the spiritual and cultural custodians of this land.

Publisher

Westerly Centre, The University of Western Australia, Australia

General Editor

Catherine Noske

Associate Editor

Josephine Taylor

Editorial Advisors

Cassandra Atherton (poetry)

Rachel Robertson (prose)

Elfie Shiosaki (Indigenous writing)

Editorial Consultants

Delys Bird (The University of Western Australia)

Barbara Bynder

Caterina Colomba (Università del Salento)

Tanya Dalziell (The University of Western Australia)

Paul Genoni (Curtin University)

Dennis Haskell (The University of Western Australia)

John Kinsella (Curtin University)

Ambelin Kwaymullina (The University of Western Australia)

Susan Lever (Hon. Associate, The University of Sydney)

John Mateer

Tracy Ryan (The University of Western Australia)

Andrew Taylor (Edith Cowan University)

Corey Wakeling (Kobe College, Japan)

David Whish-Wilson (Curtin University)

Terri-ann White (The University of Western Australia Publishing)

Administrator

Asha Ryan

Commissioning Editor

Lucy Dougan

Web Editor

Chris Arnold

Production

Design: Chil3

Typesetting: Lasertype

Print: UniPrint, The University of Western Australia

Front cover: Design: Becky Chilcott, Chil3. Image: © Chaikom, *Colourful Autumn Leaf*. Photographer, illustrator/vector artist, videographer, Thailand.

All academic work published in *Westerly* is peer-reviewed. Copyright of each piece belongs to the author; copyright of the collection belongs to the Westerly Centre. Republication is permitted on request to author and editor.

Westerly is published biannually with assistance from the State Government of WA by an investment in this project through the Culture and the Arts (WA) division of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. The opinions expressed in *Westerly* are those of individual contributors and not of the Editors or Editorial Advisors.

63.2

New Writing from
Western Australia
Fiction
Creative Non-Fiction
Poetry
Essays

Westerly



A Bush Walk

Yvonne Kickett

Yvonne Kickett is a Ballardong Noongar woman, a respected Elder and a Botanical Specialist. She is an experienced poet with a significant body of work, an artist, and she contributed to the Bilya Koort Boodja Centre for Nyoongar Culture and Environmental Knowledge in Northam.

A small crowd has gathered,
waving like anxious ants arriving at a picnic.
The sun is a giant glowing ember in the sky
warming us all as we get ready.
We start off, feet shuffling, traipsing in unison
that matches the beating of our hearts.
My sisters walk alongside me,
our hearts weighed down by a recent loss.
The gum trees sway, blown by an easterly breeze,
leaves swishing to a silent tune that makes them dance to and fro.
In the distance you can hear birds singing, different tunes,
a healing melody for our hearts;
they're the orchestra of the bush.
Dry grass, crawling ants, sheoak trees,
and dead logs line the terrain that leads to the creek bed,
dried up, but still beautiful to take in.
Then in silence, we absorb all that surrounds us,
meditating, fixating on the sounds, smells and feelings.
In the distance the rumblings of a V8 engine speeding past,
the soft sound of the dogs running in and out of the bushes,
the buzzing of flies near our ears; the peace broken,
brought back to reality in an instant.

As we make our way back to the cars
our bodies restored for now.
We hug each other, today has been good.
This, a day of healing,
one to take away the hurt.
Sisters walking as one, enjoying
the company of our Wadjela Moort.
Packing up, ready to go our separate ways,
Our hearts soar as if lifted by giant eagles wings,
sacred bushland etched in our minds forever.
A walk to remember, our bush walk.