

mx Shelflife



You're booked



AMERICA UNCHAINED

Dave Gorman, Ebury Press, \$32.95

The new travel book from comedian Dave Gorman, of the overly long *Googlewhack Adventure*, sticks it to The Man. His charming and often hilarious prose has an undercurrent of uni prank about it, a road trip across the US without giving money to any corporate and franchised American companies. It's a great idea and a good book, but difficult to sustain readers' attention with a lack of substance.

CS



★★★

DANCING BACKWARDS IN HIGH HEELS

Christine Darcas, Hachette, \$32.99

Oh, no, not another novel about How I Found Ballroom Dancing and Then Found Myself. But wait, there's more. Darcas's plot has a few twists that make the story of 41-year-old Madeleine Hutchinson unique. This yummy mummy is an expat from Chicago, who loves her hunky-but-obtuse American businessman husband and cute sons. But dancing proves a much-needed escape from an alien culture (even the Melbourne Cup brings its traumas). You'll be guessing to the end, and come to care about Madeleine in the process.

SY



★★★★

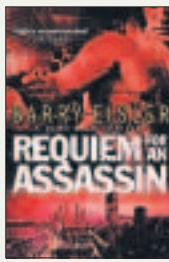


REQUIEM FOR AN ASSASSIN

Barry Eisler, Penguin, \$32.95

I was a John Rain virgin, even though Eisler's trained-to-the-millisecond master assassin has been around for the past six years (and five novels). Eisler doesn't so much draw you in to this action-packed thriller as belt you around the head. The author spent three years in a covert CIA position being trained in arms, combat, explosives, surveillance, counter-terrorism, and interrogation and manipulation, then topped it off with a black belt in judo. He brings all of these physical attributes – and even some emotional baggage – into his books via Rain, who this time is forced into completing three hits to ensure the release of his best friend.

GF



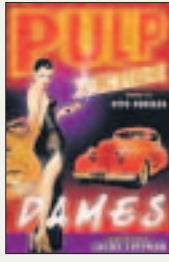
★★★

PULP FICTION: THE DAMES

Otto Penzler (ed), Murdoch Books, \$32.95

Fiesty broads, treacherous harlots and irresistible vixens take centre stage in this third volume of pulp fiction. Collecting hard-boiled stories from the '20s, '30s and '40s, this is a nostalgic romp back to the golden age of crime writing. The writing's a bit dated and not very PC, but still manages to entertain as well as anything written today.

GA



★★★

By Con Sarazen, Suzanne Yanko, Glenn Fisher and Gavin Aung Than.

Picture: NICOLE CLEARY



Harvest time

REBECCA BEISLER discovers Geoff Lemon's mission to shake poetry's image

Bohemian: a somewhat impoverished person, such as an artist or writer, who lives without regard of conventional lifestyles.

The definition adequately sums up Geoffrey Lemon; poet, performer and modern-day bohemian.

Lemon is poetry editor of new hoping-to-be quarterly publication *Harvest*, which publishes quality pieces from emerging Australian writers.

Like the publication, Lemon is a champion of nurturing new talent and sharing it with the masses. He admits he is on a crusade to establish poetry as mainstream entertainment.

Or at least to get more people at the pub listening to poets perform their work.

"People perceive (poetry) as being really dull and dense and really self-important, and it can be, but it doesn't have to be," Lemon says.

"There is so much bad poetry out there and it's always the

worst poets that go on the longest. But there is other stuff that's good, you've just got to find it. When you do stumble across it, it's a revelation."

Lemon admits calling yourself a poet comes with a vow of poverty and when asked how many Australian poets actually make a living from their work, he answers: "Les Murray".

Lemon says about 10 big-name literary publications will publish new poetry works and there are another 10 or so lower profile journals.

If you are lucky enough to be published, even in a high-profile publication, you can expect to be paid about \$100, or more likely, half that.

"You have to be really resilient and be prepared to suck it up and not view that as a condemnation of your ability if you get rejected, because you will get rejected," he says.

"It's not an earner, it's just something that you have to be committed to doing."

From this pool of rejected brilliance comes *Harvest*.

Lemon describes the new short story, poetry and art magazine as an attempt to bridge the gap between established literary journals and emerging writers who can't

RAPID FIRE

All-time favourite poem:

Dulce et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen.

Reading now:

Mr Wittgenstein's Lion, poems by Kevin Brophy.

Poet you can't stand:

T.S. Eliot.

Favourite poetry form:

Irregular, dense, fluid rhyming.

Best country for poetry:

I'm very impressed with what's happening in Australia.

Poem you can recite:

A lot of my own work I know by heart, Wilfred Owen (see above) and Yeats's *An Irish Airman Foresees His Death*.

Writer you would love to have a drink with:

Ernest Hemingway and Hunter S. Thompson.

get a foothold in those kind of publications.

"It's an attempt to put something out there that's a bit less wanky and a bit less pretentious," he says.

Harvest received about 200 submissions for the poetry section alone. Just seven made it in. But unlike most journals, every piece that is rejected receives a personal reply with feedback on how to improve their work for next time round.

At this stage *Harvest* will be published four times a year, but Lemon says that depends on the success of the first issue.

"The life expectancy for new literary publications in Australia is the same as an air force pilot in World War I – about seven days," he jokes.

The sales of this issue will fund the next one. But success or not, it won't stop Lemon writing and performing poems.

"My real mission is to write things people enjoy," he says.

"(When you're) doing gigs in crowded bars on a Friday night and manage to get everyone to shut up and listen... if you're doing that, it means that you're writing entertaining words."

■ Lemon is one of the organisers behind a monthly poetry night at Blue Velvet Bar, 60 Smith St, Collingwood.

The next one is Thursday, July 10 from 8pm. Entry by donation. Happy hour 8-9pm.

■ *Harvest* (Col. Mustard Productions Inc, RRP \$15) is out now. Visit harvestmagazine.wordpress.com



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