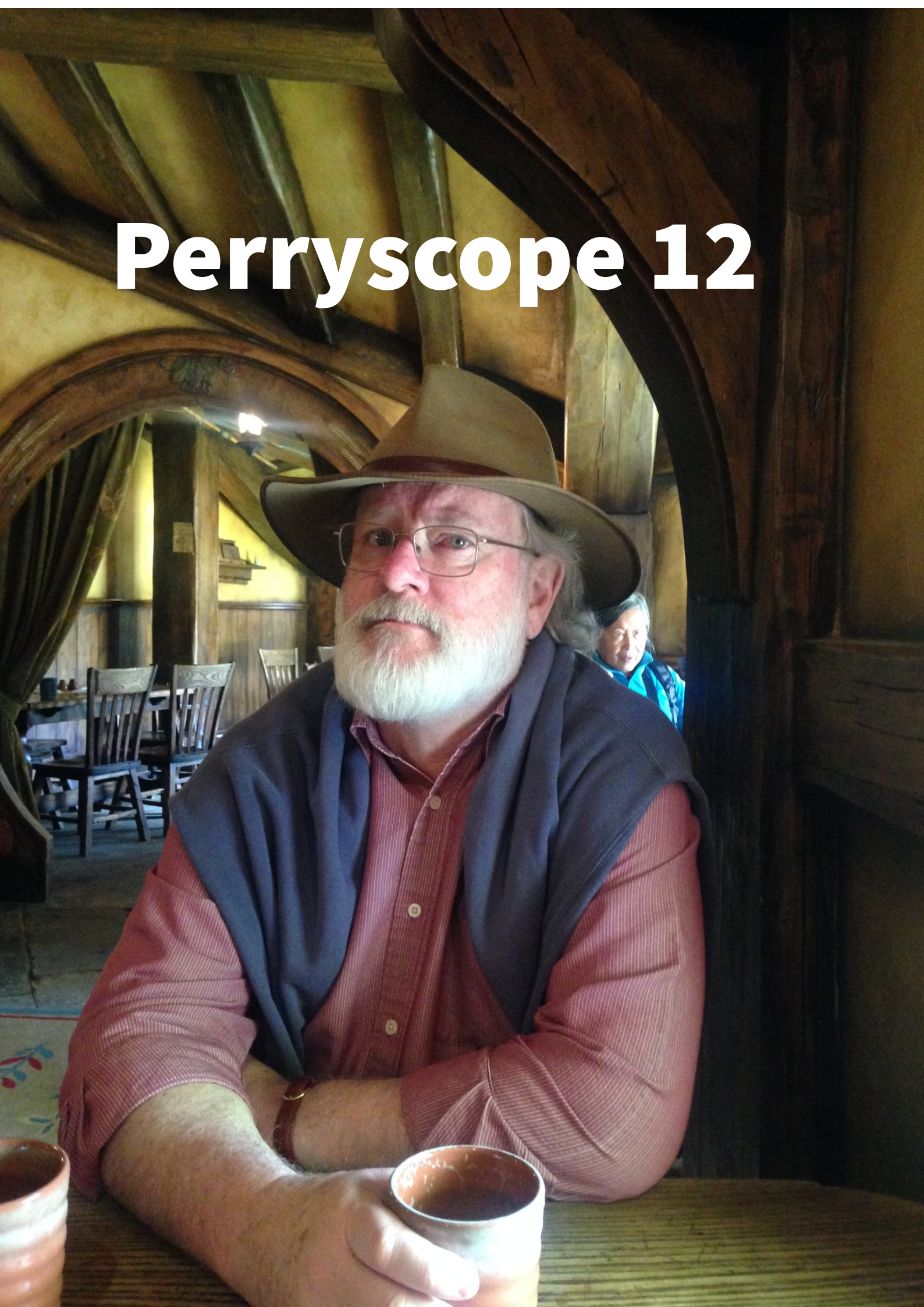


Perryscope 12



PERRYScope 12, July 2021, is an issue of the personalzine published, whenever the mood takes him, by **Perry Middlemiss**, 32 Elphin Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, AUSTRALIA 3122. E: perry@middlemiss.org
Produced initially for ANZAPA (the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association) and then whoever else unlucky enough to receive it. Also available for trade or download at efanzines.com with thanks to Bill Burns, and FANAC.org with thanks to Joe Siclari and Edie Stern. Unless otherwise specified all material is written by me.
Cover by Robyn Mills, December 2016.

INTRODUCTION

Back in issue one of this little fanzine I wrote about my father's death in June 2020. Due to the ongoing pandemic problems, state-wide lock-downs and border closures, it has been impossible for us to organise and hold the interment of my father's ashes next to my mother's, and a wake to celebrate his life.

Earlier this year things seemed to be settling down with low or zero case numbers in the states of Victoria and South Australia, and borders open for travel between the two. By the end of March we had decided that the best weekend for the two events would be the Queen's Birthday, the second weekend in June. It isn't a national holiday but is in the states that housed attendees.

And then, a hotel quarantine breach in late May.

An Australian citizen returning from overseas was quarantined in Adelaide for 14 days, so all good. But it appears that he contracted the delta variant of COVID-19 as he was leaving the quarantine hotel. He travelled to his home base of Melbourne and wandered around the city and surrounds, as you do when you think all is well. A couple of days later he started to get symptoms so he got tested and returned a positive result. Cases started to appear and Victoria went into a state-wide lock-down for a fortnight.

Within a few days it became obvious that those of us in Victoria – which includes all three of my father's children, plus spouses and most grand-children – would be unable to attend. We all thought that wasn't the best situation and so called the whole thing off.

The June date had been chosen as being the closest long weekend we could get to the anniversary of Dad's passing. Next choice was his birthday at the end of July. So tentative arrangements were made and the date was pencilled in.

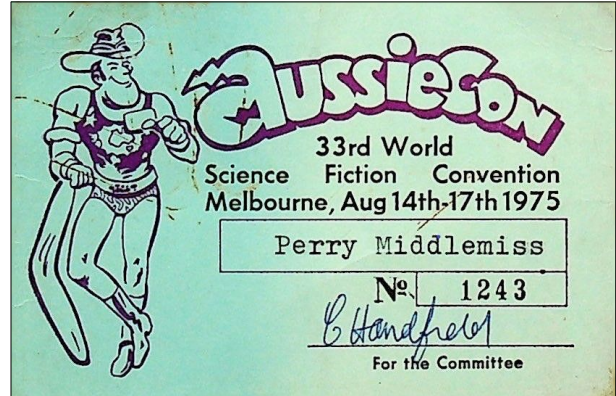
Now, as I write this at the end of June, a major outbreak in New South Wales and minor, but worrying, outbreaks in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory threaten to slam the interstate borders firmly shut once more. The July date is not looking good. Maybe sometime in the late spring will work. Luckily the cemetery only needs a few days' notice and we have a private venue for the wake. It could be a lot worse, although it is very frustrating.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MY LIFE

Things I find

Well, actually it was the missus who turned it up, stuck between some old family photos. It's the membership card I was issued for Aussiecon, the first ever science fiction convention I attended, along with my father, back in 1975.

I have very fond memories of this convention even though the travel to-and-fro from Adelaide was difficult and inconvenient.



Interestingly, when I received this card I had never met the gentleman who signed it for the committee. And now, Carey Handfield, nearly 46 years later, is one of my Friday night drinking and eating buddies. I asked Carey if he thought his signature had changed since then. He replied: "It has become more of a scrawl over time." And I know how that feels.

A Gin Masterclass

Up until a few years ago I never really had a taste for gin; it all seemed to be the same to me – mostly masked by tonic water and a slice of lemon or lime. The occasional gin and tonic was okay but that was about it.

Then someone, most likely Julian Warner, mentioned that gins were changing, that there was a new movement around that was moving the taste structure away from the standard juniper berry dominance to other botanicals. In other words it was worth my while checking them out. I came across a bottle of the Four Pillars Bloody Shiraz gin and was impressed. Here was a smallish gin maker in Healesville utilising a local product to uplift a boring old spirit, and I was convinced.

A number of various gin from local makers followed: the Weaver from Loch Distillery in Gippsland (still a major favourite); the Nosterfatu Blood Orange gin from South Melbourne; the Grenache gin from Never Never in McLaren vale; and the Christmas gins from Four Pillars and Billson's (Beechworth). Everywhere I looked there appeared to be another variety of gin coming onto the market, and it rapidly became a very enjoyable area of interest.

In early March I came across an advertisement for a gin making class based in Melbourne. A few emails later and Julian, Andrew O'Rorke and Andrew's partner Roger Halge were on board for a late June session.

The Here's Looking At You, Kid distillery is situated in Errol Street, quite near the main shopping area of North Melbourne. The major initial point of interest was the large still set up downstairs in the window – way beyond anything I might have had designs on. Our instructor for the day, Liz Beech, indicated that she had imported it from Kentucky about five years previously when she had started the business. Apparently she couldn't find anything of comparable size and quality in Australia. Hardly surprising.

And so began the class upstairs where we were introduced to the basics of distilling from a base spirit, in which you have to ensure you first get rid of the unwanted organics such as formaldehyde and methanol in the first of a series of distillation processes. This



information was for background purposes only as the setups we would be using would take the ethanol, from the second stage of the original distillation, combined with selected botanicals, to be distilled into our final product.

Wikipedia defines gin as “a distilled alcoholic drink that derives its predominant flavour from juniper berries.” In fact, in Australia at least, you can't call something a gin unless a minimum of 50% of the botanicals used are juniper berries. So that was one flavour profile we couldn't avoid. The rest was a matter of choice, with some of the major botanicals on offer being orange, lemon myrtle, strawberry gum, quandong, star anise and bergamot,

among many others. The botanical components are individually chosen by each class attendee, poured into the ethanol which is then put into the copper belly of the still. The top and the bottom of the copper still are then bolted together, a small flame is introduced under the belly and you are away.

The rest of the process is relatively simple, you basically sit and wait for about an hour while the 250mls of ethanol are evaporated and then condensed out into droplets falling into a receiving bottle half-filled with purified water. A quick filtration of the final product and it is ready to go back into the bottle for labelling.

It is quite surprising how the various botanical combinations form such very differing flavours in the final product – mine were bergamot, orange, lemon myrtle and strawberry gum. We were told that it might take a day or so for the gin to settle down, though that didn't stop us trying a small sample before heading home. It was good but I can



The main still with our instructor



Julian and Andrew setting up

see that it would take a lot of experimentation to get the exact flavour profile you were looking for. All in all it was an excellent day.

WHAT I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT LATELY

Podcasting – TWO CHAIRS TALKING, co-hosted with David Grigg

Notes from this month's podcasts

Episode 54: (8 June 2021) *Fandom is a way of life*

David and I discuss how we came to get into fandom and the role that fanzines played in our early fannish careers. I then go on to interview Rose Mitchell about her fannish life leading up to her being named Fan GoH at the 2020 Worldcon in New Zealand.



Episode 55: (22 June 2021) *Make me know the nature of their crimes*

We are back looking at crime fiction this episode. David looks at two Garry Disher novels while I discuss *The Wife and the Widow* and *Later* (see reviews in this issue). Then we both discuss *The Chase*, the latest novel by Candice Fox.

You can access the current, and all past podcast episodes at www.rightword.com.au or you can subscribe through any podcast subscription service.

WHAT I'VE BEEN READING LATELY

Codes – F: format (e for electronic, blank for paper); R: rating, out of 5.0.

Abbr – trans: translated; nvla – novella; Ned K – Ned Kelly Award winner

June 2021 books

Title	Author	Genre	Date	F	R	Pub Date	Notes
<i>The Ballad of Beta-2</i>	Samuel R. Delany	Sf	June 3	e	4.3	1965	
<i>First Love</i>	Turgenev	Literary	June 6		4.4	1860	trans
<i>Upright Women Wanted</i>	Sarah Gailey	Sf	June 10	e	3.4	2020	nvla
<i>The Memory Police</i>	Yōko Ogawa	Sf	June 14		4.4	2019	trans
<i>The Wife and the Widow</i>	Christian White	Crime	June 17		4.3	2019	Ned K
<i>Later</i>	Stephen King	Crime	June 20		3.2	2021	
<i>The Labyrinth</i>	Amanda Lohrey	Literary	June 24		4.3	2020	Aust
<i>Riot Baby</i>	Tochi Onyebuchi	Sf	June 29	e	4.1	2020	nvla
<i>The Passport</i>	Herta Müller	Lit	June 30		2.4	1986	trans

Books read in the month: 9

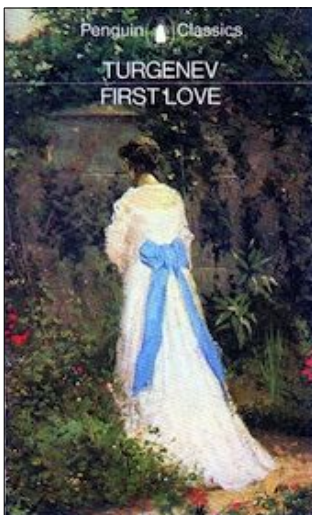
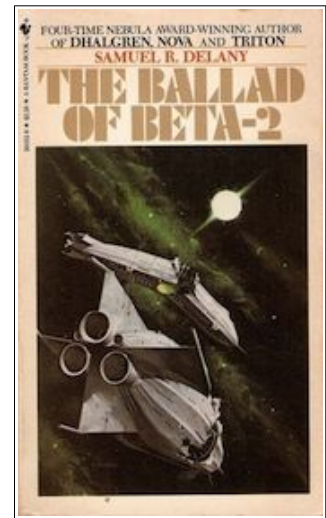
Yearly total to end of month: 50

Notes:

The Ballad of Beta-2 (1965) – Nominated for the 1966 Nebula Award for Best Novella.

In the distant future mankind has spread to the stars. One group set out on a centuries-long mission only to be overtaken by technology – FTL travel had been developed and Earthmen were already in the star system when they arrived. Two of the ships failed on the journey and nobody understands why. Joneny, who is a student of galactic anthropology, is assigned the task of finding out, armed only with the text of the poem “The Ballad of Beta-2”. This well-written story becomes a problem-solving tale that rises above the general level of these sort of sf stories involving spaceship disasters. I have some quibbles about Delany’s “solution” but they don’t mar my feelings about this short novel.

R: 4.3/5.0

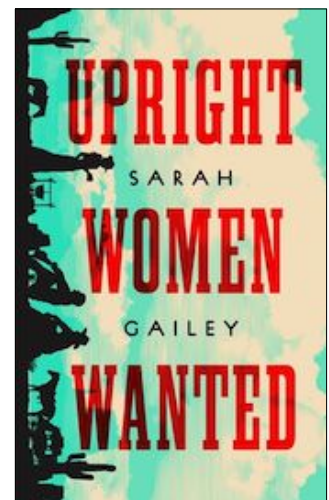


First Love (1860) – In his old age, Vladimir Petrovich looks back on his first love at the age of sixteen. He had been staying with his parents at their holiday estate in the country when the nearly destitute Princess Zasyekin moves in next door. Valdimir falls for the princess’s daughter, the twenty-one year old Zinaida, and his unrequited passion for the young woman will have a major impact on him for the rest of that summer and into his later life. Set in the world of the fading aristocracy of Russia in the nineteenth-century Turgenev shows his full powers of observation and empathy as he documents the young man’s emotional highs and lows while navigating the tense borderline between boyhood and adulthood.

R: 4.4/5.0

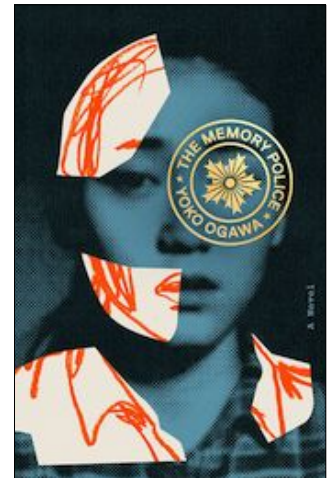
Upright Women Wanted (2020) – Nominated for the 2021 Hugo Award for Best Novella.

Sometime in an indeterminate future the USA has fragmented into various political and religious segments. Technology and transport has collapsed and information is strictly controlled and spread across the countryside by authorised Librarians, an all-women nun-like organisation. Travel is by horse and wagon, and the feel of the world is that of the Old West. Esther Augustus stows away with these Librarians after her best friend is executed for accessing Unapproved Material, and eventually joins the group and becomes an apprentice. This is essentially a Western with political overtones – you quickly determine that the Librarians are basically an insurrectionist organisation – and, possible modern-day metaphors aside, again concentrates too much on the romantic rather than the political element. R: 3.4/5.0



The Memory Police (2019) – Nominated for the 2019 World Fantasy Award for Best Novel.

Originally published in Japan in 1994 but only translated into English in 2019. On a small Japanese island the inhabitants are slowly losing their association with reality and everyday items begin to disappear. The items, such as birds, calendars, boats, and fruit, lose all sense of meaning to the island's inhabitants, are lost to memory and are then destroyed by the Memory Police. Yet there are some people who seem immune to this affliction and attempt to carry on as before. There seems to be no explanation for all of this and the people grow to accept the gradual deterioration of their world and the persecution of the unaffected by the Police. Full of drama and building tension this is a strangely ethereal novel that continues to intrigue long after the book is closed. R: 4.4/5.0



The Wife and the Widow (2019) – See major review below.



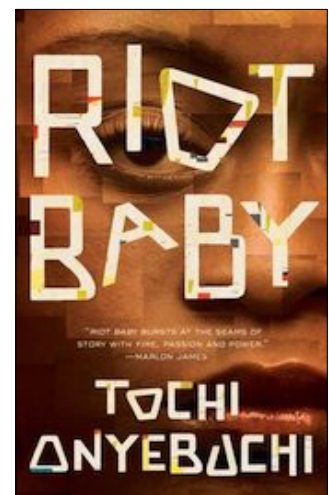
Later (2021) – This is the third novel Stephen King has produced for Hard Case Crime – who mostly publish noirish pulp crime novels – following ***The Colorado Kid*** (2006) and ***Joyland*** (2013). This is essentially a crime novel, with added supernatural elements as you might expect for a King novel. The narrator, Jamie Conklin, has been born with the gift of being able to see dead people (rather like the young kid in the film ***The Sixth Sense*** – which is referenced here) and discovers that, however bad and mean they may have been in real life, in death they are generally rather pleasant and cannot tell any lies. Jamie's single mother is a literary agent who makes use of her son's unusual ability by visiting the writing shed of a recently dead author. This writer (Regis Thomas) is a massive-selling popular novelist and the agents' commissions from his work are the only thing keeping Jamie and his mother afloat. Thomas died mid-novel and in a rather

amusing scene Jamie interviews him, post death, about the ending of that book so his mother can finish it and earn her agent's fee. But Jamie's mother's friend Liz has other uses for Jamie's abilities, rather sinister ones. This is an interesting take on the "seeing dead people" trope but it doesn't have the absolute sparkle of King's earlier works. R: 3.2/5.0

The Labyrinth (2020) – See major review below.

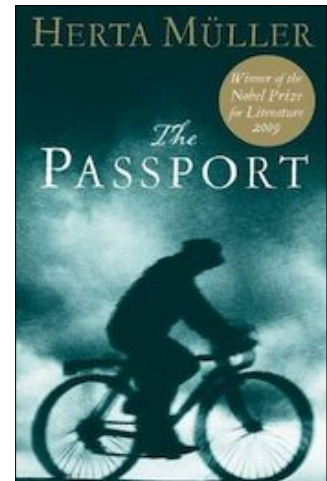
Riot Baby (2020) – Nominated for the 2021 Locus, Hugo and Nebula Awards for Best Novella.

Ella is a young woman with a telekinetic power that she struggles to control. Her younger brother Kev, the riot baby of the book's title, is born in the middle of the riots following the beating of Rodney King in 1991 by LAPD officers. Their lives as African-Americans in the late 20th and early 21st centuries are hard and brutal. Kev is eventually

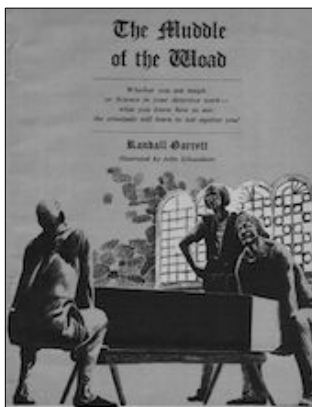


imprisoned for, supposedly, his role in an armed robbery. Meanwhile Ella has slowly begun to get her powers under control to the extent that she can see into the future and into the past. When she visits Kev in prison she is able to temporarily transport him to other places, some good and some bad, where he can see himself being born, and into a possible future. This is an angry novella, with reason, though it ends on a note of hope that Black American can gain the power of White America and come to live in a form of harmony and peace. R: 4.1/5.0

The Passport (1986) – This short novel by the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2009 follows the efforts of Windisch, who lives in a German village in Romania during the time of the Ceausescu dictatorship, to obtain a passport so he can migrate to Germany. Everyone in the village feels trapped by poverty and politics and while some long to escape, others are just resigned to their fate. The story is told in sparse, clipped prose which tends to distance the reader from any sense of the inner life of the book's characters. I'm not sure if this is as a result of the translation or was there in the original. In any event it is disconcerting. There are no likeable or sympathetic characters here; their situation is bleak, and so is the book. R: 2.4/5.0



Other short fiction:



The Muddle of the Woad – Randall Garrett (*Analog* June 1965) – novella

This story forms a part of the author's Lord Darcy series (present day, alternate history, Richard the Lionheart did not die, England and France under one king, magic follows very scientific rules). Darcy is on holidays back in England when he is called in, by the King himself (John IV), to investigate the discovery of a body, painted in blue woad, in a coffin recently built for the Duke of Kent. This is essentially a police procedural with the forensics component undertaken using Garrett's intricate Laws of Magic rather than science. The mystery unfolds properly and there is no "cheating" on the author's part. An excellent combination of mystery and magic.

World of Ptavvs by Larry Niven (*Worlds of Tomorrow* March 1965) – novella

Later expanded into the novel of the same name this is the second story in the author's Known Space series. Humans have discovered a reflective statue on the ocean floor which they later determine is an alien stuck in a stasis field. Using a newly developed time-slowing device the alien is released and we discover that is a member of a long-extinct race that at one time ruled the galaxy by way of its telepathic abilities. The alien was stranded on Earth 1.5 billion years before and now must retrieve a telepathy amplifier unit from the outer solar system in order to complete the total subjugation of the



human race. This is space opera in the old sense, but also a precursor of newer works such as *The Expanse* by S. A. Corey. It is a complex, fast-moving adventure story though simply written, concentrating more on the scientific problems the plot throws up rather than the interactions between the characters.

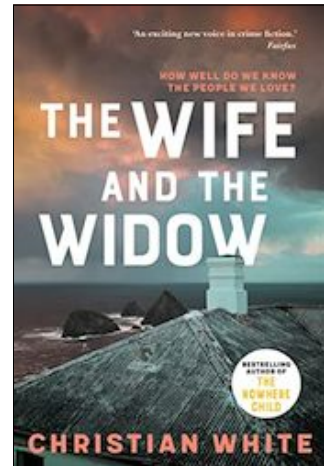
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REVIEWS OF AUSTRALIAN BOOKS 1

The Wife and the Widow (2019) by Christian White
Winner of the 2020 Ned Kelly Award for Best Novel.
Genre: Crime

Christian White won the 2020 Ned Kelly Award for this, his second novel, against some strong opposition, with Nick Gadd, Dervla McTienan, Dave Warner and David Whish-Wilson being among the others in line for the honour.

This is a very well-structured crime novel set mainly on the fictional Victorian island of Belport situated a short ferry ride off the coast of the Bellarine Peninsular. It follows two main threads: the widow, Kate Keddle, and the wife, Abby Gilpin.



At the start of the novel Kate is waiting at Tullamarine airport for her husband John to return from a London medical conference. He has been away for a fortnight or so and has kept in touch with his Melbourne family via Skype (the novel was written in pre-Zoom popularity days). The arriving passengers clear customs in dribs and drabs but her husband never appears. In the days that follow she discovers that her husband has been living a secret life for the past few months, having left his job as a doctor in a palliative care clinic, and, most likely, hasn't been in London at any sort of conference. The police are contacted but before anything really gets started Kate receives a notification from a security firm that her holiday home's alarm on Belport has been tripped. Given the book and chapter titles dealing with her character the reader soon realises John will not be alive when he is next found. The investigation into his murder will drive Kate's appearances in this book.

In the novel's other thread – and you know the two will collide head-on at some point – Abby's husband Ray runs a handyman business maintaining holiday homes on the island and doing the odd jobs for the permanent residents that need doing. But Ray has secret stash of gay porn in the garage of their home and the discovery of a body leads Abby to start suspecting her husband of the crime.

It is very hard to provide much more detail about his book as the major revelation involves a huge twist that is very beautifully concealed until close to the end, and to discuss it in any way would greatly detract from a reader's enjoyment of this book. About two-thirds of the way through I started to suspect that something was awry with the plot, thinking that the author

had possibly messed up in some way. But I should not have been so quick to jump to a conclusion.

By the end of the novel everything is rounded off to a satisfactory conclusion, though I doubt you will easily guess the outcome. This novel was certainly worth the award it received and your time as a reader.

R: 4.3/5.0

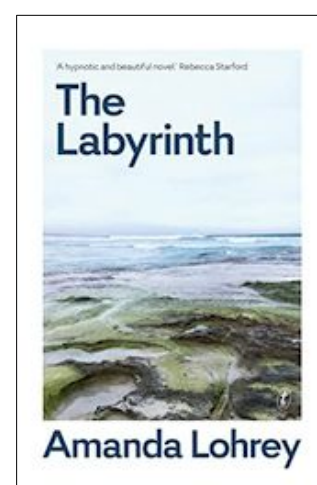
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REVIEWS OF AUSTRALIAN BOOKS 2

The Labyrinth (2020) by Amanda Lohrey
Shortlisted for 2021 Miles Franklin Award.
Genre: Literary

Amanda Lohrey is an Australian writer whose first novel was published in 1984. She is probably best known for her works ***Camille's Bread*** (which won the Australian Literary Society Gold Medal in 1996) and ***Reading Madame Bovary***. I must confess to having not read any of her previous works though I'm sure this will change after reading this novel.

Erica Marsden has fled Sydney and moved to a small, seaside town to live near the prison where her son is serving a long sentence for a serious crime. Consumed by her grief over the crime, and her son's indifference, she begins to become obsessed with the idea of building a labyrinth in her garden, basing the idea on a memory from her childhood.



When she first starts mentioning this in the novel I envisaged a complicated puzzle structure, but I was confusing the concept with that of a maze. Early on the author provides a correction:

I have learned that a simple labyrinth can be laid out by anyone, unlike a maze, which is a puzzle of mostly blind alleys designed for entrapment. This maze is a challenge to the brain (how smart are you), the labyrinth to heart (will you surrender). In the maze you grapple with the challenge but in the labyrinth you let go. Effortlessly you come back to where you started, somehow changed by the act of surrender. In this way the labyrinth is said to be a model of reversible destiny. (pp 36-37)

And there we have the structure of the novel: it is a challenge to the heart, firstly in the design and the building, and then in the experience of traversing it. Erica's main problem lies with the construction, or so she thinks. She is introduced to an itinerant backpacker, Jurko, who is living rough in the area and the two slowly form a bond over the build. He is, as she later discovers, an illegal immigrant from Albania who jumped ship in Queensland and has made his way down the eastern seaboard of Australia to her small seaside community. He is also an

experienced stone-mason who is familiar with the concept of labyrinths, though he has never built one.

The connection between the two characters forms the heart of this book. It is a connection, first of some distance, which then becomes one of friendship and mutual respect. As the labyrinth design evolves and the build commences the reader starts to see the slow changes in both characters, and in the relationship between Erica and her son.

This is a calm, excellent novel and one worthy of a place on the Miles Franklin award shortlist.

R: 4.3/5.0

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WHAT I'VE BEEN WATCHING LATELY

Television

Mare of Easttown (Mini-series – 7 episodes) (2021)

Platform: Foxtel

Genre: Crime Drama

Kate Winslet leads this excellent police procedural mini-series set in a small town just outside Philadelphia. As Marianne “Mare” Sheehan she is the lead detective in the local police force; she is also a grandmother, divorced, mother of a suicide, unkempt and slovenly. For the past year she has been trying to solve the mystery of the disappearance of a young girl, and then the body of another murdered girl is found in a nearby creek. The mystery evolves over the course of the series and just when you think you have a solution in hand the story veers off in another direction. Winslet gives an excellent, nuanced and gritty performance discarding the need to disguise the damage the years and mileage have taken on her face, body and psyche. The supporting cast portrays the troubled and dysfunctional family members and townsfolk with gusto. There is a lot to like about this drama. There were a couple of issues left unresolved at the end, but such is life. R: 4.4/5.0



The Stranger (Mini-series – 8 episodes) (2020)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Crime Drama

A lawyer (Adam Price, played by Richard Armitage) is approached by a young woman, the Stranger of the title, in a bar and told that his wife faked her pregnancy, and miss-carriage, two years previously. After confronting his wife with this she demands a break in their relationship and takes off. Meanwhile, a young man is found naked and hypothermic in the woods after a bonfire party, the decapitated head of an alpaca is found in the town's main square, the stranger approaches another

woman with news that her daughter is working as an escort, and you start to think that this town is about to explode. I thought there were too many things going on, and the fact that all of the main characters seemed to be related in some way or other stretched the bounds of credibility too much. (Surely there is more than one school and one junior football club in this town.) Most of the story threads are resolved at the end though some are just left hanging. R: 3.0/5.0

Cover notes: Robyn took this photo of me in the small pub at Hobbiton on New Zealand's North Island. We had travelled there in December 2016 so I could attend SMOFCon South – a convention-planning convention held by the committee that would go on to run ConZealand, the 2020 World Science Fiction Convention. We had taken four or five days to travel from Auckland to Wellington and this was our first stop along the way.

Film

The Woman in the Window (2021)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Drama

It takes only a few minutes to realise that this is an updated version of Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, and only a few minutes more than that to realise it just isn't going to cut it. Based on the 2018 novel by A. J. Finn, this film follows the story of Dr. Anna Fox (Amy Adams), a child psychologist who is confined to her large, four-storey house in Manhattan by an overwhelming bout of agoraphobia. She spends her days, and nights, staring out the window at her neighbours (don't these people have blinds or curtains?) and one night witnesses what appears to be the murder of the woman across the street. But there is something just off about the directing and cinematography here; nobody seems overly convincing and there are too many Hitchcock rip-off scenes done badly. I used to think that Brian de Palma, on his bad days, was a poor-man's Hitchcock, but Joe Wright, the director here, doesn't even get to that level. R: 2.4/5.0



***Green Book* (2018)** – Winner of the Best Motion Picture, Best Original Screenplay and Best Supporting Actor (Mahershala Ali) Awards at the 2019 Academy Awards

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Drama

I'm getting to this very late but the wait has been worth it. Tony Lip, played by Viggo Mortensen looking rather fat and bloated, is an Italian-American nightclub bouncer from the Bronx who is hired as the driver for an African-American concert pianist (Dr Donald Shirley, played by Mahershala Ali) undertaking a tour of towns and cities in the American Deep South. Tensions are set up early when it is obvious that Lip is a classic racist who only takes the job for the money. But

Shirley has prejudices of his own and, as the film follows the tour through an increasingly racist and divided countryside, the two men grow to respect and then to like each other, both slowly changing over the course of the film. Excellent work by all players and a great script make this a film not to be missed. R: 4.6/5.0

***The Maiden Heist* (2009) (aka *The Heist*)**

Platform: Amazon Prime

Genre: Crime Comedy

Morgan Freeman, Christopher Walken and William H. Macy are security guards at a small art museum where they have worked for many years. Each of them is fixated on one particular piece in the museum (Walken on the painting *The Lonely Maiden*, Freeman on a painting of a woman and her cats, and Macy on a nude Greek statue). After they discover that several pieces from the gallery (including each of their favourites) are to be sold to another museum in Denmark they concoct a plan to steal the works during shipment and replace them with copies. The tone of this rather like a British film made in the USA: it's a light comic piece with an intricate setup and execution. It's not one that will end up on anyone's "best of the year" lists but is an amusing and enjoyable piece nonetheless. R: 3.1/5.0



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WHAT I'VE BEEN LISTENING TO LATELY

Podcast – Sideways

Best-selling author Matthew Syed looks at the ideas that shape our lives, but he takes a different slant on the story in this podcast from the BBC: well, different from the usual way of looking at these sorts of thing.

In the first episode he takes a detailed look at Stockholm Syndrome, the condition where hostages develop a psychological bond with their captors during captivity. This term was first used by the media in 1973 when four hostages were taken during a bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden. The hostages defended their captors after being released and would not agree to testify in court against them. Most specifically the term was based on the experiences of Kristin Enmark, one of the hostages who appeared to become more attached to the captors than the others. Trouble is, this whole story is incorrect. Enmark was never interviewed by any of the Stockholm Syndrome "experts" before Syed talked to her. She tells her side of the story and the real reason why she sided with her captors becomes clear.

In later programs Syed deals with the case of a woman in Britain who was charged with, and then convicted of the murder of her two young children; incorrectly because of the misunderstanding of how statistics and probably work. He also looks at the military strategy that helped the Brexit campaign; how anyone can become a memory champion; and at Max Martin the Swedish musical genius behind 22 Number 1 hit singles.

Only one season so far, with eight episodes. Each episode is only 30 minutes long and this one is highly recommended.

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PERRYSCOPE Responses

Jerry Kaufman: “The novel version, possibly expanded from the magazine appearance, of **...And Call Me Conrad**, was called ***This Immortal***. I haven't read it since it was published, but do recall that it introduced the typical Zelazny hero — an ultimate outsider who had little or nothing to do with normal society.”

[**PM:** I am aware of the novel version, and may even have read that in the past. I specifically wanted to read the magazine serialisation this time as David Grigg and I were discussing the 1966 Hugos on our podcast, and *that* was the version that had been nominated. Maybe the novel was better — though I'm not in the mood to try to find out at present.]

“Funny that Joseph Nichols and you have written more about ***Dune***. It's another I haven't read since it was published, but it's one I've been planning to insert into my stream of reading to see how it's held up. I wonder if I'll have the same reaction as Joseph about the ‘missing middle volume.’”

[**PM:** Again this was based on the requirement to read it for a discussion on our podcast. Though it is an interesting exercise to read it ahead of the upcoming new film adaptation.]

Leigh Edmonds: “With a friend like your mate Chong you're never likely to run out of covers for this fanzine. He can put you in all kinds of fantastical locations.”

[**PM:** I'm not sure I should be giving him ideas. He has enough of his own.]

“I bet you are glad that you got away to southern New South Wales when you did and I hope that you are getting a lot of reading and etc done during this new lockdown season. [**PM:** Yes, and yes.] Even having had the first of two jabs Valma and I are happy to hide out in our comfy home where the renovations and alterations have started so everything seems sorta temporary. In the first week of lockdown the builder wasn't allowed here because we are owner/occupiers. This coming week he will be allowed to work in the yard but not in the house, which does not please him too much as the weather forecast is rather dismal.”

[**PM:** I had my first AstraZeneca jab in mid-May, just getting in before the mad rush caused by our latest hard lockdown in Victoria. I didn't book an appointment but just rolled up to the walk-in vaccination centre at the Royal Exhibition Buildings in Carlton Gardens. Practically no wait at all, then. Now, during the lockdown, it seems people are waiting for hours and some are being turned away. Just good timing on my part.]

“I liked your description of your visit to the National Gallery. Many years ago we went there with Marilyn, Lewis and Nick, which was very educational and entertaining. That was the first time we'd seen any of the hyper realistic painting that Nick specializes in these days, I assume that you've seen his entry in the Archibald this year which looks as brilliant as usual. I wonder why the judges haven't picked up on Nick's brilliance yet, one of these years ...” [**PM:** We can

but hope. I gather there have been some judges over the years who were vehemently against the photo-realism style that Nick pursues these days. [Late breaking news: Nick's portrait made the final but missed out on the top prize again.]]

"I think we've all seen Sunflowers, if not in person then in print or on the screen so we know it reasonably well. So we didn't need to see another photo of it in *Perryscope*. What we saw instead was rather artistic with the people standing looking at the painting on an otherwise blank wall. (There is an artist, perhaps more than one, who does that kind of thing but no name comes to mind.) And I have to ask, what is that white line on the floor. Is it the warning line that anyone who crosses it will be vaporized by atomic blasters?"

[**PM:** No atomic blasters, unfortunately, but very efficient gallery supervising staff, which is probably the next best thing. I was looking at one painting and realised someone was trying to get a better look next to me. I stepped to the side only for the person to pretty much step directly between me and the painting, over the white line. I thought about saying something but was beaten to the punch by a staff member who quietly informed her that she was too close. And then she didn't even acknowledge his existence when she stepped away. I took a deep breath and moved on. No point in getting all grumpy about it. I was on holiday after all.]

"Joseph's long letter about *Dune* was interesting, but since I haven't read it I don't know whether I agree with him or not. There's another of the sfnal 'classics' I haven't read. Too much Doc Smith I guess. If I ever get around to reading it I wonder if I will be overcome with eager delight during the first reading or move straight to the disappointment that Joseph felt on his second read."

[**PM:** Even the smallest amount of Doc Smith is too much in my opinion. It would be interesting to hear your thoughts on the new film adaptation of *Dune* coming out later this year.]

Tineke Hazel: "What a competent Artist friend you have, to pencil draw such a fine portrait of you, with such a characteristic direct and honest gaze... It reminds one of a Chief of the eminent clan of Kaboutertjes — that ancient and mysterious clan of unseen and under-appreciated souls who organise and help people in many and various ways All that is missing is the Red Cap....."

[**PM:** I must admit I had to look this one up. A "kabouter" is a Dutch gnome or leprechaun. According to Wikipedia "The males have long, full beards and wear tall, pointed red hats." I just hope this doesn't give Chong any ideas.]

I also heard from: **Mark Olson; Martin Field** (who recommended the John Lanchester novel *The Debt to Pleasure*, which is on a bookshelf here, somewhere); **William Brieding; Chong;** and **John Newman;** thank you one and all.

This fanzine acknowledges the members of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which it is produced in Hawthorn, Victoria, and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.