



**PERRYSCOPE 23**



**PERRYScope 23**, June 2022, is an issue of a personalzine, published monthly, by **Perry Middlemiss**, 32 Elphin Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, AUSTRALIA 3122. E: [perry@middlemiss.org](mailto:perry@middlemiss.org)  
Produced initially for ANZAPA (the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association) and then anyone else unlucky enough to receive it. Also available for trade or download at [efanzines.com](http://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 photograph by Robyn Mills.

### INTRODUCTION

So the Australian Federal Election campaign is now over. Hopefully it will be another three years before we have to go through that all over again. Though, with no fixed terms in place, and the Australian Labor Party governing with either a minimal majority or as a minority government, we may not last the full three years.

There seems to have a seismic change in voter preferences with this election. Women appear to have voted very differently to men, and a lot of metropolitan voters decided that climate change, finally, was a problem that needs to be addressed. The number of independent members of the House of Representatives will be the largest in my lifetime, and should make for some subtle political manoeuvring by the major parties (left and right). In my electorate of Kooyong, the sitting member Josh Frydenburg, deputy leader of the Liberal Party leader and Australian Treasurer and destined to be a future Prime Minister of this country, was defeated by an independent, Dr. Monique Ryan, running on three major issues: climate change, integrity and honesty in politics, and equality and respect for women. It was a tight contest but, given this was once one of the safest Conservative seats in the country, it will be seen as a famous victory.

It looks like the next few years will be very interesting in Australian politics. It may be that the interest will lie in innovative solutions to pressing problems rather than the culture wars and personality clashes we've seen over the past twenty years. One can only hope.

[Late breaking update: the Australian Labor Party now look like being able to government in their own right with a two seat majority — 76 seats in the House of Representatives are required for a majority and it appears that Labor have won 77.]

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The legendary Australian sf fan John Bangsund died after contracting COVID-19 in 2020. A year later his wife, Sally Yeoland was forced to move from her rental accommodation at short notice and contacted Irwin Hirsh to see if he would take on John's large collection of letters. He agreed, and was handed six archive boxes of material when he went to pick them up. Irwin, and his wife, are also in the middle of a house move so nothing much was done about the letters until a month or so back. Irwin then had a chat with me over a beer about the problem he faced and I offered to help out where I could.

We finally got together in early May. After a bit of a discussion we decided that the best course of action would be to order the letters into chronological order, tackling each of the six boxes in isolation first and then combining the material together later. We were a bit worried that we might be separating material that John had decided needed to stay together so we kept an eye out for specific manilla folders that might be of interest. We'd keep those separate within each box, ie out of the year folders, and tackle them later.

To say that the collection is in a confused state would be rather an understatement. Letters, carbons, pay slips, submissions for ASFR, scrappy notes and a whole lot else have been stuffed into each box in no order at all. It was packed in a hurry and shows it. This isn't a criticism, just a description of what we've found. Sally obviously had no choice but to do things in a hurry. We're grateful that she was able to keep the material that she did.

Irwin and I, with help from his wife Wendy, spent four hours re-arranging Box No. 1 at our first meeting. I wouldn't like to make a firm estimate as to the number of individual items in the box, but I'd say around 2,000 as a guess. We have our work cut out for us, but if we tackle it one-day-a-month we'll make some headway. What we do after that is another matter.

Irwin has already made arrangements to deposit his fannish material at Monash University — where the John Foyster collection is held — so he may add these letters to that collection when the time comes, or, more likely, attempt to donate them as a separate collection.

So what's in the John Bangsund letters you ask? Well, letters from such people as Ursula K. Le Guin, Tom Disch, Brian Aldiss, John Brunner, George Turner, me (!!), Lin Carter, and a slew of fannish and professional sf names from Australia and elsewhere. And that's just the first box.

The fun begins.

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### WHERE I GREW UP — Part 2

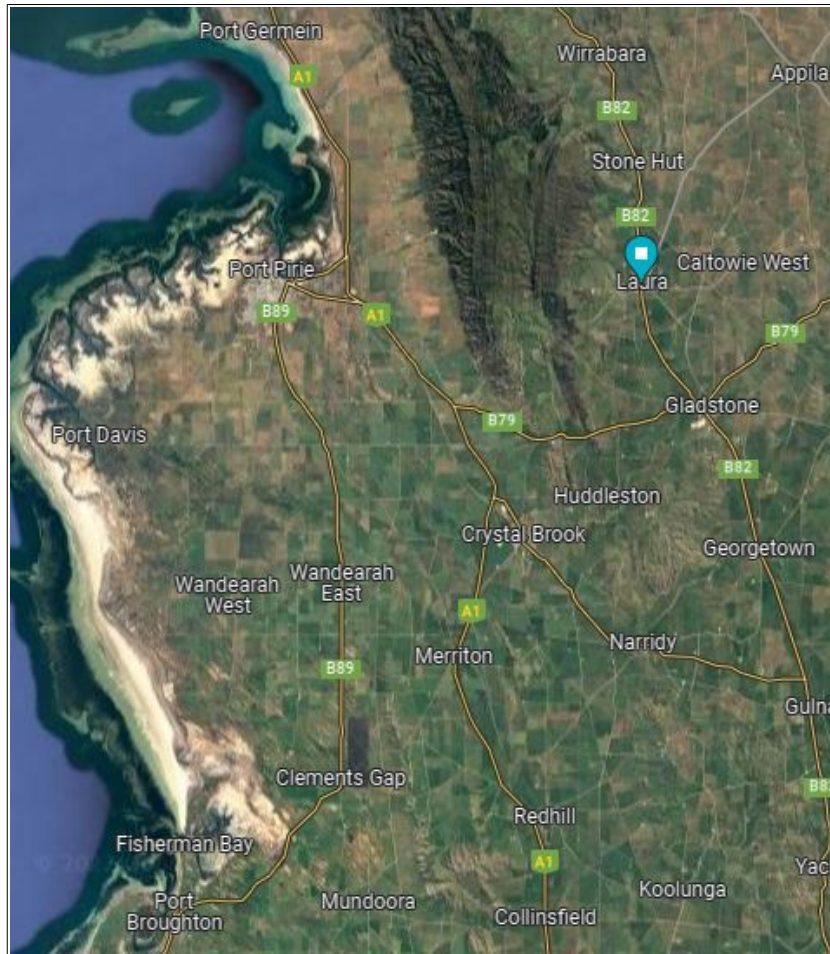
[The following piece is a sort-of sequel to the articles I wrote for **Perryscope 13** and **22**, which gave some details about the place where I grew up and where I went to school. You may find this easier to follow, and understand some of the references, if you have read them first.]

As I've mentioned previously in these series of articles, if you wanted any form of entertainment in Laura in the 1960s you made it yourself. Or elevated some sort of natural event to entertainment status.

Laura was founded on the banks of the Rocky River, a tributary of the Broughton River, which flows out into Spencer Gulf, south of Port Pirie. The Rocky River rises in the Wirrabara Forest on the eastern side of the southern Flinders Ranges and flows past Stone Hut, Laura and Gladstone before joining the Broughton. When we lived in Laura the river

was predominantly dry, although I've heard rumours that it had water in it most of the year when the town was founded in the 1880s. The story goes that it was originally fed by a spring in the northern hills but this was cut off at some time by a small earthquake and landslide. I haven't attempted to confirm that explanation but it sounds reasonable enough.

The southern Flinders Ranges are situated in an interesting location on the Australian mainland. If you draw a direct line between the Kimberley region in north-western Western Australia and Melbourne in the south-east of the country, the bottom of the Flinders Ranges in the mid-north of South Australia are the first range of hills of any height that you



encounter. Not that hills of 500-750m can be considered high by most countries' standards, but compared to the mostly flat terrain of the deserts of Western Australia and South Australia they might be giants. (You can see the start of the mountain range in the middle top of the map above; the crinkly, dark green bit.)

The reason why they are important here is that cyclones that cross the north-west of Australia between December and April generally turn into rain depressions as they cross the coast and then head in a south-easterly direction (down the line we drew from the Kimberley to Melbourne), dropping some rain along the way but only making their first major dump of rain when they hit hills of any height. In this case those hills are the southern Flinders Ranges. This rain is generally carried in thunder-storm cells which tend to drop their loads over a small area of ground. If the storms were big enough then Laura

would get its share of the downfall, but, usually, the rain fell further north, around Wirrabara, around the area where the Rocky River starts. So it was quite possible for Laura to be dry, when Wirrabara, some 10-12 kilometres north, was getting drenched. This all leads to water finally running down the previously dry river beds of the Rocky, on the western side of the Laura township.

Dorothea Mackellar, in the second verse of her famous poem “My Country”, talks about “droughts and flooding rains” as being a standard feature of the Australian landscape. And so it was around Laura. By the time one of the storm clouds dropped its load north of Laura the surrounding ground had been baked by an unforgiving sun to the consistency of ceramic tiles. Whatever water fell on it would penetrate only through a millimetre or so of dust and then run off heading downwards to long-established water-courses. And with every little gully or creek all leading to the one place – the Rocky River – it didn’t take long for a large amount of water to all be heading in one direction, along one river bed. By mid-summer any water that might have been in pools in the river from winter and spring rains had completely dried up, and the river bed was covered in tree litter from the overhanging river red gums and other eucalypts.

Back in the 1960s news of local events in Laura passed by word-of-mouth in the street or by phone around the community. Anything out of the ordinary was considered newsworthy, or of interest, including news that the river was going to “run”. Phone calls warning of the water rising in the river would be passed down from one farm and household to another and before long the whole town of Laura was aware that something was going on. Such rain



events had caused flooding that impacted Laura on a regular basis between the 1870s and 1919. At that time, just after the first World War, a series of levies had been built around three sides of the township in an attempt to channel the water down the river bed rather than having it overflow some of the small creeks and flow into the town itself. This had a double effect for the town’s residents; it meant that the town wouldn’t be flooded (there was



some minor flooding in 1975 that my brother helped alleviate), and it also meant that all the water was going to be in one place.

If you heard about the event in time, and you got there early enough, you were able to find a good spot on the bridge (see photo previous page) on the western side of the township to watch the “river come down”. It didn’t cascade like a raging flood the few times that I saw it, rather it ploughed relentlessly onward along the riverbed, pushing everything ahead of it – branches, sand, leaves and other debris – and providing us young kids, and a number of adults, with a cinematic experience of real-life.

Big floods, of which thankfully there were few, would undermine the River Red Gums in some water channels as the soil was rapidly eroded out from underneath them. The huge gums would then fall into the river to be swept downstream by the waters, and would then act as massive battering rams as they collided with bridges and fences and other trees, causing massive amounts of damage. Luckily enough I didn’t get to see any floods of that level, though you would get a chance to see the outcomes as the repairs took months and sometimes years to finish.

Looking back on it now you wonder what all the fuss was about. But this was nature providing a spectacle, and a warning of sorts, and in those simpler times it was about all the fun we could hope to get. And it taught you to be always wary of what could happen rather suddenly. And it warned you never to camp in a dry river bed in Australia, no matter how comfortable the river sand might appear to be. And it was simple fun watching it.

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## WHAT I’VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT LATELY

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

### Notes from this month's podcasts

**Episode 74:** (17 May 2022) *Murder, though it have no tongue, will speak*

This is one of our regular crime fiction episodes, and David and I both discuss the new Dervla McTiernan novel, *THE MURDER RULE*; David is impressed with a China Mieville novel (crime or science fiction, or a combination of the two?) and I enjoy another in the Sue Grafton series of PI novels featuring Kinsey Millhone.

You can access the current, and all past podcast episodes at [twochairs.website](http://twochairs.website), or you can subscribe through any podcast subscription service.



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## WHAT I'VE BEEN READING LATELY

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

Abbr – Aust: Australian; Nvla: novella; Trans: translated.

### Mat 2022 books

Title	Author	Genre	Date	F	R	Pub Date	Notes
<b><i>Duck Season Death</i></b>	June Wright	Crime	May 1		3.2	2014	Aust
<b><i>Better Off Dead</i></b>	Lee & Andrew Child	Thriller	May 8		3.0	2021	
<b><i>“B” is For Burglar</i></b>	Sue Grafton	Crime	May 10		4.2	1985	
<b><i>A Spindle Splintered</i></b>	Alix E. Harrow	Fantasy	May 13	e	4.0	2021	Nvla
<b><i>The Murder Rule</i></b>	Dervla McTiernan	Crime	May 15		3.2	2022	Aust
<b><i>Cold Enough for Snow</i></b>	Jessica Au	Literary	May 18		3.3	2022	Aust
<b><i>Hail Mary Project</i></b>	Andy Weir	Sf	May 24	e	3.8	2021	
<b><i>Elder Race</i></b>	Adrian Tchaikovsky	Sf	May 25	e	3.5	2021	Nvla
<b><i>Leave the Gun, Take the Cannoli</i></b>	Mark Seal	Non-fic	May 25		4.0	2021	
<b><i>The Water Statues</i></b>	Fleur Jaeggy (trans Gini Alhadeff)	Lit	May 28		2.2	1980	Trans

Books read in the month: 10

Yearly total to end of month: 37

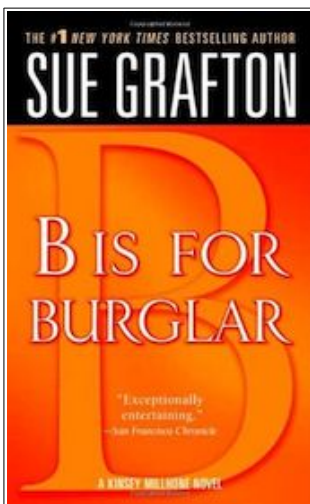
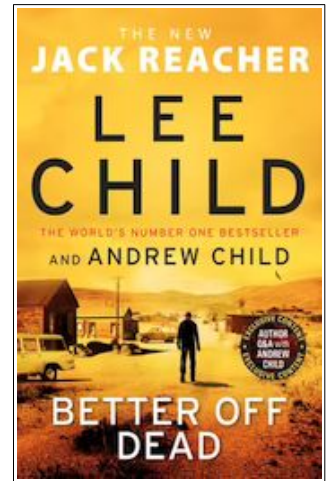
### Notes:

***Duck Season Death*** (2014) – June Wright is best known for her first novel, ***Murder in the Telephone Exchange*** (1948), and this was followed by another 5 novels in the period up to 1966. A couple of her manuscripts were rejected during her lifetime, this was one of them though the only one published posthumously. In the novel, Athol Sefton, the publisher of an Australian literary magazine called *Culture and Critic*, is fatally shot while duck hunting in northern Victoria. He and his nephew, and a slew of other characters, had gathered at *The Duck and Dog Inn* outside the small town of Dunbavin for the duck hunting season. The nephew is convinced the death was an act of murder, but none of the others will hear of it so he sets out to solve the crime on his own. Into the mix drops a police detective who had originally arrived to interview Sefton about the death of his late wife. As the novel progresses it becomes rather like a classic “country-house” mystery, in which all of the characters are a possible suspect. But without Sefton to interview the detective starts to narrow his focus on the nephew, pointing to him as the most probable perpetrator of both murders. So it becomes a race between the detective trying to pin the murder on the nephew, and the



nephew trying to find the real killer. Amusing and enjoyable without being of the highest order. R: 3.2/5.0

**Better Off Dead** (2021) – The 26<sup>th</sup> in the Jack Reacher series of novels, and the second to be written by the “Child” brothers. Here Reacher comes upon what he thinks is a wrecked car on a highway only to be accosted by the woman occupant with a gun. It’s a setup, but after she determines Reacher is not who she’s waiting for the two join forces to try to track down her missing brother. The brother appears to have been working as a bomb maker for a drug-smuggler near the US-Mexican border and has somehow managed to get a warning out to her sister. This novel, told in the first person, is generally in line with what you’d expect from a Reacher novel but the spark seems to be going out of them. The story is told mainly in a staccato sentence style which begins to intrude into the flow. Bound to be very popular though I’m not sure how much longer I’ll be sticking with this series. R: 3.0/5.0



**“B” is For Burglar** (1985) – The 2<sup>nd</sup> in Sue Grafton’s series featuring P.I. Kinsey Millhone.

Winner of the Anthony Award for Best Novel and the Shamus Award for Best PI Hardcover in 1986.

Millhone is contacted by Beverly Danziger who is attempting to contact her own sister regarding a legal matter. Apparently the sister, Elaine Boldt, who spends half the year in southern California in Santa Teresa and the other half in Florida, has not been seen since she left for Boca Raton some weeks earlier. This at first seems like a simple matter, and then Beverly Danziger tells Millhone to drop the case followed shortly after by Danziger’s husband making wild allegations against his wife. A quick trip to Florida reveals that someone is camping out in Boldt’s Florida apartment without permission and the case starts to get very twisted and complicated.

You would be hard-pressed to find a better Californian PI novel since Ross Macdonald’s Lew Archer novels of the 1940-70s. While not quite in their class this is a worthy successor, and I look forward to the rest of the series. R: 4.2/5.0

**A Spindle Splintered** (2021) – A finalist for the 2022 Hugo and Locus Awards for Best Novella.

This novella is another story which re-imagines a classic fairy tale, in this case Sleeping Beauty, and imbues it with a modern sensibility and style. Zinnia Gray is dying; she has an incurable disease which threatens to kill her before she is 22. On her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday her best friend Charm throws a Sleeping Beauty themed party in an old tower, complete with spinning wheel. Zinnia pricks her finger on the needle and is dragged through a portal, into a foreign world, by Primrose, a fairy tale princess about to suffer the Sleeping Beauty treatment. Together they work to save Primrose

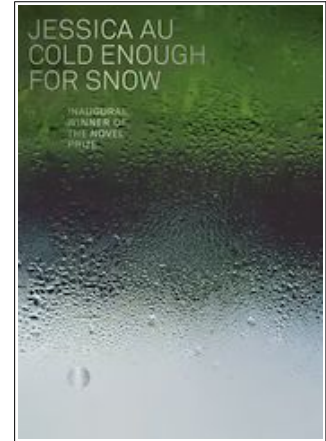




from the curse and to return Zinnia to her own world. Told with Harrow's signature style that is funny, romantic, dark, and insightful this is the first in a proposed series of novellas. One to watch. R: 4.0/5.0

***The Murder Rule*** (2022) – See major review below.

***Cold Enough for Snow*** (2022) – Jessica Au's debut novel (which is really novella length) follows an unnamed narrator and her mother as they travel around Japan together. The two haven't seen each other for some time and now live in separate countries so the narrator has arranged this joint holiday in order to re-connect with her mother. This is a book told in a discursive style, reminiscent of Gerald Murnane's later works, digressing from subject to subject, slowly filling in the narrator's history with her mother and her husband, and some of her mother's story. There is no progression here – the characters are the same at the end of the work as they were at the beginning – and there is no sense of a standard story, with no drama or tension evident. It is basically a meditative piece that a reader will either follow or be bored by. At one point the narrator notes: "My boyfriend often joked that I was the kind of person who would be happy in a mountain temple, told only to sweep the dust from the floor each day, to contemplate the nature of time and labour, and the difference, or absolute sameness, between a dirty surface and a clean one." (p63) Which pretty much explains this whole novel. I found it interesting and well-written but I doubt I will remember it for very long. R: 3.3/5.0



***Hail Mary Project*** (2021) – Finalist for the 2022 Hugo Award for Best Novel, and winner of the Goodreads Choice Award for Best SF Novel of 2021.

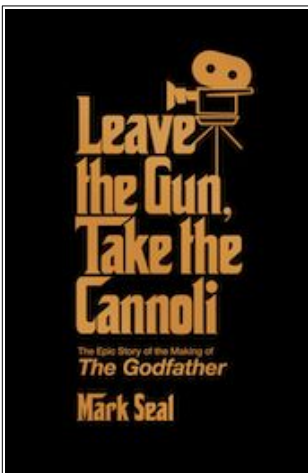
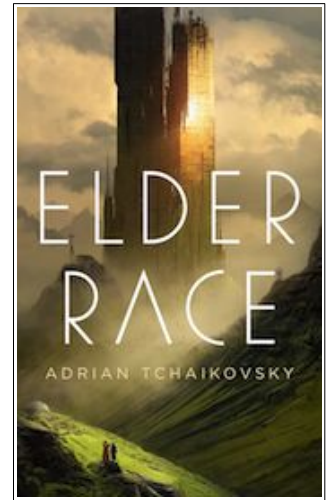
Weir's third novel is another sf puzzle-solving work, this time set in interstellar space. Ryland Grace wakes up in a room with no idea of who or where he is. In the room with him are a robot who keeps asking him questions and two mummified corpses. It transpires that he is in a spaceship, far from earth and the two corpses are the other members of his crew. Everything about Grace and the spaceship is a puzzle which he sets out to solve in classic Weir "science the shit out of it" mode. Once he remembers who he is, via a series of flashbacks to his earlier life on Earth—a technique the author uses a lot—and the robots let him out of his room, he discovers he is in the Tau Ceti solar system and within a few hundred kilometres of an alien vessel.

Grace slowly remembers that he is there to investigate the origins of the Astrophage, a virus-like alien life form that has infiltrated our own solar system, and is gradually "eating" our sun. In order to work out what is happening and come up with a solution to the imminent death of our sun and the extermination of all life on Earth, Grace has to form an alliance with the alien on the other ship and work on solving more problems than seem humanly possible. This is at once a first contact story, scientific puzzle, buddy comedy and space opera all rolled into one, and, if you turn off some of your major critical senses, is a

page-turner and lot of fun. Just don't dig too deeply into some of the authorial choices and decisions. Some of them are a bit wobbly. R: 3.8/5.0

**Elder Race** (2021) – A finalist for the 2022 Hugo Award for Best Novella.

Sometime in the distant past Earth spread out across the galaxy colonising a large number of habitable planets. Then, these new colonies were abandoned as the home planet fell into economic collapse. But Earth rose up again and sent out emissaries to these colonies to observe and document their development without interfering in any way. On the unnamed world of this novella, Lynesse Fourth Daughter has come to the tower of the last remaining emissary, Nyrgoth, seeking his help to expel a demon that is wrecking havoc in the nearby lands. A few generations previously Nyrgoth had helped an ancestor of Lynesse's and left behind a promise that he would help her line if requested, so now he is compelled to interfere. The novella is told in alternating points-of-view between Lynesee and Nyrgoth, and one of the strengths of the work is the very different way the two see the world: one, from a background of a medieval society, in terms of superstition and magic; and the other in terms of science. This is a good example of Tchaikovsky's work, exploring issues of communication between species, while also telling an interesting story. R: 3.5/5.0

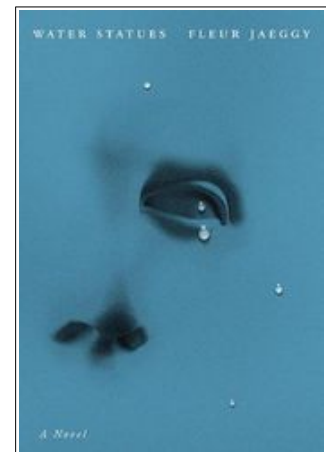


**Leave the Gun, Take the Cannoli** (2021) – Subtitled “The Epic Story of the Making of *The Godfather*”.

Published to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of Francis Ford Coppola's cinema masterpiece, this is a non-fiction account of the development of the film, from Mario Puzo's struggles to get the original novel written and then accepted, through the purchase of the film rights by the then-struggling studio Paramount Pictures, to the casting, and the decisions about who should write the screenplay and who should direct the film. With so many possibilities for the production to be cancelled, shelved, delayed, interfered with or otherwise stymied it's a wonder the thing was ever finished at all, let alone that it turned out as well as it did. I'm sure that having this film as one of my all-time favourites helped my appreciation of this

book, but all the same I think it is a fascinating look behind the scenes at the state of Hollywood in the early 1970s as a new wave of young directors forced their own worldview on the film-making process. R: 4.0/5.0

**The Water Statues** (1980) – This short novel is a very strange and peculiar beast indeed. It features a number of relatives, friends and servants of Becklam, a wealthy recluse who lives in an Amsterdam villa with a flooded basement, the basement where he keeps his statues. The book's characters spend their time observing the world around them, commenting on what they see, sometimes



to themselves and sometimes to others. Some of the writing here is wonderful, and some is not understandable at all, at least by this reader. With a translated work it is impossible to determine if this is down to the original work or the fault of the translator. Anyway, this isn't my idea of fiction: it doesn't have a plot and the characters seem to wander aimlessly. It reads as if the paragraphs here are the edits from a larger work, disconnected and isolated. You feel that there must be something going on but you just can't get an actual glimpse of it. Extremely puzzling. R: 2.2/5.0

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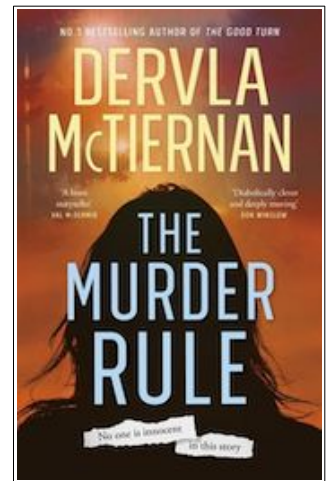
## REVIEWS OF AUSTRALIAN BOOKS

***The Murder Rule*** (2022) by Dervla McTiernan

**Genre:** Crime

Following three highly successful novels featuring her Irish detective Cormac Reilly (*The Ruin*, *The Scholar* and *The Good Turn*), McTiernan now changes her locale to the USA and a very different style of crime novel; more John Grisham than Ian Rankin.

Here her attention is on a legal team known as the Innocence Project that investigates possible miscarriages of justice. Her main character, Hannah Rockeby, is a new starter with the group who proves herself both highly proficient in her research skills and also highly ambitious, going to underhand methods to get herself appointed to the team investigating an old murder case, supposedly committed by Michael Dandridge twenty years earlier.



The novel follows Rockeby in one stream and her mother Laura, via her diary, in another, and it soon becomes clear that the Mike in Laura's diary is the same Michael that Hannah is helping out. Or is she? Rockeby is really out for justice for her mother, who, according to the diary, was wronged by Dandridge years ago and who may have been responsible for the death of Laura's then lover.

Dandridge's murder conviction is overthrown by an appeals court but the prosecution – with members of the original team still in place – demand a re-trial. So the bulk of the book deals with the slow gathering of evidence from the original crime, the discovery of witnesses and the unravelling of the various inter-connections between the parties.

I found the novel slow getting started and hard to get into and the court scenes at the end too rushed, and frankly, unbelievable. Rockeby proves to have ulterior motives in just about everything she does but is still allowed the opportunity to participate in the trial in a way that really stretches the bounds of credibility. There seem to be a lot of reviews raving about this novel but I didn't find it to be at the level of her previous work and was rather disappointed.

R: 3.2/5.0



## WHAT I'VE BEEN WATCHING LATELY

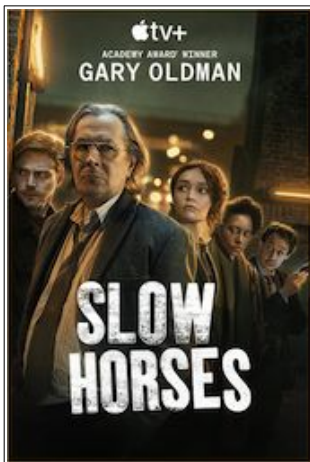
### Television

#### ***The Sinner*** (Season 3 – 8 episodes) (2020)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Crime Drama

Bill Pullman is back as Detective Harry Ambrose, this time investigating the death of a man in a car accident on a deserted backroad in upstate New York. At first it seems like a simple problem but then clues start pointing towards the other occupant of the car, Jamie Burns, who survived with barely a scratch. Ambrose begins to get close to Burns to create a rapport and to try to figure out what makes him tick. Trouble is he, and other characters, make too many decisions that don't make sense and which put them in physical and psychological danger, and they do so with the most spurious of reasons. Not as good as the first two seasons. R: 3.0/5.0



#### ***Slow Horses*** (Season 1 – 6 episodes) (2022)

Platform: Apple TV

Genre: Crime Drama

Based on the Mick Herron novel of the same name this series follows the exploits of the spies working in Slough House. While ostensibly still members of the British Intelligence Service the personnel here have been demoted due to some cock-up or other, such as leaving a sensitive file on a train or following the wrong suspect resulting in the deaths of civilians. A right-wing British group calling themselves the Sons of Albion have kidnapped a young Pakistani man and have threatened to behead him live on the internet. But the Slow Horses of Slough House get wind of the plot and find a way into the investigation, against the specific wishes of their "betters" at HQ. This is a suspenseful, witty, intelligent, and

sometimes funny homage to the classic British spy stories of old. Gary Oldman relishes the role of Jackson Lamb, the flatulent, swearsy, lazy, boozing, pain-in-the-arse head of Slough, and the rest of the cast work off his lead to great effect. Wonderful stuff. R: 4.4/5.0

#### ***Goliath*** (Season 1 – 8 episodes) (2016)

Platform: Amazon Prime Video

Genre: Legal Drama

Billy Bob Thornton plays Billy McBride, an ex-high flying corporate lawyer in LA who is now estranged from his family, living in a seedy motel, alcoholic and surviving on small time criminal cases. Into his lap falls a case of wrongful death with his opposition being Cooperman McBride, his previous legal firm. As McBride digs into the case he starts to see that it may well be bigger than he originally thought and that it might just be able to provide him with the form of redemption and revenge he needs. This series starts off well—a



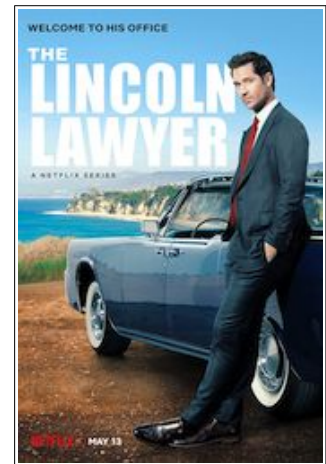
good set-up, a bunch of interesting main and side characters, and Thornton playing the lead role as if he were born to it—but it starts to fade out in the last two episodes. The big astounding reveal that viewers have all been expecting doesn't eventuate and the court scenes in the last episode come across as rather ridiculous. You know who is going to win from the outset, the interest is in how they will achieve that. After 6 episodes I would have been willing to rate this in the fours; at the end I'm not sure I'll watch another season, it dies away that much. R: 3.1/5.0

### ***The Lincoln Lawyer*** (Season 1 – 10 episodes) (2022)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Legal Drama

Mickey Haller is an LA lawyer struggling to get his life back together after recovering from an opioid addiction following a surfing accident. When another LA lawyer is murdered Haller is handed the dead man's full case-list by a judge. Top of the agenda is a murder trial in which a tech entrepreneur is charged with murdering his wife and her lover. The accused is insistent on the upcoming trial going ahead even though Haller hasn't had enough time to get across that case, nor any of the others that he has to run. But Mickey is nothing if not resourceful and spends most of his time working on his cases, as he is driven from LA court to court, in the back of his Lincoln Town-Car. There are a large number of plot threads running through this series, as you might expect given the number of cases Haller is working on. And I was impressed by the way they all came together and were resolved over the last couple of episodes, with just a hint of something more to come. Based on the first Haller novel by Michael Connelly, ***The Brass Verdict*** (2008), you can view this as the counter-point to the ***Bosch*** television series, also written by Connelly: in ***Bosch*** it's the police detectives who are the focus, here it's the defence lawyers. Like that show, this one has excellent writing, direction and acting from all concerned. I liked this a lot and am glad there will be further series upcoming. R: 4.3/5.0



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## Film

### ***The Limehouse Golem*** (2016)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Crime Drama

In Victorian London Detective John Kildare (Bill Nighy) of Scotland Yard investigates a series of gruesome slasher murders. There are heavy echoes of Jack the Ripper here, naturally, and the period detail appears to have been handled very well indeed. The cast is solid and work well, but I wasn't convinced by the story (screenplay by Peter Ackroyd from his own novel). The motivations of the main characters, other than Kildare, don't really hold up to much scrutiny; revenge yes, but in that form? We watched it mainly because Nighy was in it, though I have since discovered that the lead was originally



intended for Alan Rickman. R: 3.2/5.0

***Everything Everywhere All At Once* (2022)**

Platform: Cinema

Genre: SF Comedy Drama

Evelyn Wang (Michelle Yeoh) is a woman with major problems: her father is causing trouble, her husband is thinking of getting a divorce, her taxes are a mess, and her daughter hates her. And then she discovers that she may be the only version of all the Evelyn Wangs in the vast multi-verse who can save the universe from the super-villain Jobu Tupaki. Mayhem ensues, and keeps happening while she first tries to figure out what is going on and then what she can actually do about it. There are some wonderful scenes here – such as the all-in kung fu action sequence in the tax office – and some excellent supporting roles; I didn't recognise Jamie Lee Curtis for some time. This film is basically a bittersweet, family domestic drama and marital comedy hiding in plain sight within a fantastical exploration of multi-dimensional chaos. It is, by turns, an absurd, funny, ridiculous, melodramatic, and silly, and a high action Asian American kung fu science fiction film. And I loved it. R: 4.5/5.0



***Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* (2022)**

Platform: Cinema

Genre: SF Marvel Superhero

Benedict Cumberbatch is back as Doctor Strange in this second film featuring the Sorcerer as the main character. Here he encounters, and saves, a girl called America Chavez who has been pursued by an enormous one-eyed octopus monster. He later discovers that she has the ability to jump between universes and is being sought by the monster's demonic master in order to steal her power. So Strange goes to recruit Wanda Maximoff (Elizabeth Olsen) only to discover that she has gone mad—pursuing a universe in which her sons still live—and that she is the demon he hopes to defeat. What follows is two hours of spectacular CGI effects as Strange and Chavez jump

from one universe to another trying to defeat Wanda and save the girl and whole multiverse. You really need to have watched the Marvel television series ***WandaVision*** to understand what is going on here, and what is driving Wanda's mania. There are some interesting cameos in the later stages of the film and while it is engaging to look at I came away with the feeling that it was really acting as a transitional film between one phase of the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the next. Enjoyable, but not top drawer.

R: 3.3/5.0

***Maigret* (2022)**

Platform: Cinema

Genre: Crime Drama

In French with subtitles.

Gerard Depardieu stars as the titular French homicide detective, with this film based on Georges Simenon's 1954 novel ***Maigret et***





**la jeune morte.** A young woman is found dead on the Paris streets, stabbed multiple times, wearing an evening gown with no identity documents in her purse. Maigret is called in to investigate and it becomes obvious very early on that this murder affects him deeply. This is a classic police procedural plot, with the lead detective gradually piecing together the young woman's identity, and then whereabouts on the night of her death. The possible perpetrators are identified relatively quickly and the joy of this film is not in the tangled web of clues leading in all directions but in Maigret's slow and methodical approach to solving the crime. It is wonderful stuff, and Depardieu seems destined to play this role, especially as he moves into his later years. There are some amusing sequences along the way, especially in regards to Maigret's smoking habit, which he is warned off by his doctor at the start of the film. And the reason why he is so obsessed with this case is subtly hinted at a couple of times, which adds to the richness of the layering. Wonderful stuff. R: 4.3/5.0

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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.
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### PERRYSCOPE Responses

#### Perryscope 19/20/21:

**Rose Mitchell:** "You angst over typos and minor errors in your 'zine, but I think these are OK in a perzine/fanzine. These publications are not dissertations nor investigative pieces of journalism. It's the editor's personal view, their observations and musings. And let's face it, some typos can be highly amusing, if not a bit of insight into the writer."

[**PM:** I think I've been making too much of the typos lately. They may be quirky but they are also embarrassing, and I more I talk about them the more that seem to appear.]

"Your high school days sound very adventurous, boarding down in the city at such a tender age. At 17 I was fighting with my parents to be able to stay out till midnight and NOT have my dad pick me up from wherever. I rebelled by 18. Perhaps your exposure to the world outside of the family home and having to fend for yourself (not entirely but you were personally responsible to yourself during your teens) has made you the erudite person you are today. We now know your Security Question, "what was the first record album you bought".

[**PM:** Oops.]

"All the good stuff on TV seems to be on Foxtel, a streaming service I do not subscribe to. I refuse to pay the Murdochs any of my dollars and have no qualms about viewing these shows by 'ahem' other means."

[**PM:** I believe the Binge streaming service in Australia allows you to see the bulk of the Foxtel programs – well, drama and the like. I'm looking to drop Foxtel soon and pick up just those channels I want on other services.]

“I couldn’t get into *The Lost Daughter*. I disliked the main protagonist and now I know why. You thought she was an untrustworthy narrator and that resonated with me; she was untrustworthy. I didn’t finish the film and have no inclinations to read the book because I disliked the characters so much. I don’t feel guilty about this decision after all I am not a critic and have no obligation to read something I don’t want to nor like, as you have said elsewhere, reading is not a chore. I did enjoy the latest Disher though. I too thought it a bit lightweight and very early on (first chapter I recall), the walk along the beach scene seemed significant and it was. Ending no surprise.”

And Rose wrote later:

“Your New Normal and Retirement sounds very idyllic, you have shaped your retirement to be a full and busy time: publishing fanzines, other projects that provide opportunities for catching up with friends and acquaintances as well as driving around Victoria enjoying fine wine and food.”

[PM: It’s basically a case of self-preservation. If I didn’t get out and about and catch up with friends a lot I fear I might just start fading away. Too many men my age put far too much into their work and neglected their friendships along the way. They hit retirement age and, frankly, have no idea about what they are going to do to fill the time. Hopefully I’ve come to some sort of solution to that problem.]

“The plans for the internment of your father’s ashes were a lovely idea with a Ceremony making it into an event albeit a sombre and decorous event befitting the occasion. How heartwarming so many people turned up to both the Ceremony and the Commemoration. After lockdowns prevented a traditional funeral and wake, you and your siblings gave him a decent send off. From the many stories you have told of him, he sounded like a bit of a country boy *Larrikin*.”

[PM: I admit I hadn’t thought of him that way but I can see how you would come to that conclusion.]

## Perryscope 22:

**Rich Lynch:** “The grade school you went to in South Australia appears to have been even smaller than the one I went to, in northern New York State near the Canadian border. I remember that it was small enough (only 17 people in my Senior class) that there was really no opportunity to discover what kinds of things I might be good at. If my parents had lived just a few miles to the east from there, I would have been in a much larger school district that had specialized instruction available in both academics and athletics.”

[PM: We probably had about 18-20 in the senior class – Grade 7 – so about the same.]

“But that’s not really what I’m writing a LoC about. You mention that when you were about eight years old you nearly died on the school playground. I had what I, in retrospect, think might have been a near-death experience when I was a Senior at my school. It happened in March 1967 and in retrospect, it was one of the stupidest things I’ve ever done. Several months earlier my mom and dad had sold the house we had lived in since before I had even been in kindergarten, and we had moved into a rental that had a shore front on a small inlet of Lake Ontario. Plenty of winter that far north, with January temperatures at times as low as -40 degrees. The inlet froze over at the end of December and by March, during

the beginning of the spring thaw, there was still a significant layer of ice. From that house it was a mile walk, around the inlet, to get to school. But it was also a straight line distance, across the ice, of perhaps a third of a mile. So on a foggy morning in March, I decided to take the short cut.

“There was enough fog and mist that by the time I got just a short distance off-shore, it became difficult to see either shoreline. By the middle of the inlet it was just me all by myself with nature — no signs of life anywhere that I could see. And then, I heard the ice crack.

“I kept going, which may not have been the right thing to do. But by then the other side of the inlet was probably closer and it was sheer willpower that finally got me there. I remember that I kept telling myself, over and over, ‘I am going to make it...I am going to make it...’ The ice held. What probably happened was that I had traversed over a thinner spot in the ice — a creek fed into the inlet and it's possible there was a current which had prevented the ice in that spot from being as thick as in other places.

“If the ice had broken through I am not sure what I would have done — I would have been on my own to try and save myself. I’m fortunate that it never came to that, and indeed, I was scared enough by the experience that I never mentioned it to anyone. And since that day, more than a half century ago, I have never again gone out on natural ice.

“Don't think there's a moral to the story other than it amazes me sometimes that I survived to adulthood. But I guess we've all had that same thought at one time or another, yes?”

[PM: Yes, very much so. It is worth remembering these incidents but not a lot of point pondering them too much. They aren't going to come around again, hopefully.]

**Leigh Edmonds:** “Have you been to consult with your brain doctor of late? If not I think you should because I fear you've gone soft in the head. Either that or your schoolyard accident is finally having an effect. The only one of the movies that you reviewed that I've also seen was *The Ice Road* and I thought your 1.7 was very generous. Care to explain yourself! After the first ten minutes the only question was; who would have been killed by the end and, perhaps, how long before the end of the movie the bad guy would be killed off. There were a few moments of interest as trucks broke through the ice and sank predictably but dramatically, but you couldn't say the same for the plotting, script or acting. All it needed to complete the whole thing was a boy and a pet dog. (When I say that I ‘watched’ that movie that is shorthand for having it playing on my computer screen while working on a model of a QANTAS Short Sandringham, so it wasn't a complete waste of my time.)

[PM: I have a feeling that I gave it a 1.7 because of some of the scenes on the ice — not the drama at the front of the screen you understand, but more about the landscape. I do think I need to be harsher with some of my ratings. I'm getting there.]

“Your primary school story was interesting and reminded me of my own primary school years. Dimboola must have been a bigger place because we had a separate class for every year and there was a room for each class. What you called the ‘lunch shed’ we called the ‘bike shed’ and we had two of them, one for the big kids and one for the little kids. The one further from the school buildings was also where one learned to smoke. The school buildings were brick rather than weatherboard so we did not suffer the extremes of



temperature that you did in a weatherboard building – that delight was saved for us in high school. You reminded me that I spent one year in the little kids shelter shed when the adults somehow decided that half a dozen of us kids would get two years of teaching jammed into us in one year and the only place to teach us all that stuff was in the shelter shed. I don't remember much about it but I bet our teacher was far from thrilled."

**[PM:** The school did have a separate 'bike shed' where kids could store their bicycles during the day. Needless to say there weren't such things as locks required. Everyone knew everyone else's bike and if you tried riding off with the wrong one you would have been caught out very quickly.]

"Yes. I have given some thought to my funeral service and I have written it down. In summary it goes like this; listen to some Schubert, listen to no more than 15 minutes of talking and then listen to some Bach. I have not yet decided to write in that the doors will be locked to keep you in while the music is being played, but I could be persuaded. And no, it's not the St Matthew Passion. As for what they can do with my body, I hadn't thought about that. I did read somewhere that there is a place where the burial consists of somebody coming out with a big post-hole digger, digging the hole, the body being dropped in feet first and the dirt being pushed into the hole again. That sounds alright to me."

**[PM:** Sounds a bit passionless to me. I, too, have thought about the music I might like to have played at my 'funeral service'. Do you think that 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door' might be a tad too much?]

"Rose's comments on our comments about long range travel made me wonder how people faced the month long trip from Europe to Australia even as late as the 1970s before Boeing 747s killed off that market. Some people suggest that it was a long holiday between one place of work and another but I don't know that being stuck on a boat with a bunch of strangers for a month would be any better than being stuck in a hurtling metal tube for the best part of a day with more strangers. Which makes me wonder how people will feel in the future being stuck in another hurtling metal tube for days, weeks or months with a bunch of strangers to get to far off celestial destinations. Having said that, now that Qantas has announced that they are going ahead with Project Sunrise to fly direct from Sydney to London and New York, I wouldn't mind taking that flight, not because of the destinations but just for the experience of flying half way around the world in less than a day. If you timed it right you could get off in New York, catch a flight to London Heathrow and then the flight from London back home. No need to go and see tired old tourist traps, just a lot of flying in air conditioned comfort. Of course you'd have to travel up at the rich person's end of the aircraft, down the back would be much less fun. Flying around the world in less than two days, how stfnal would that be, considering what flying was like when pulp stf was invented."

**[PM:** Flying all day on two flights just to get back to where you started? Count me out. I'm willing to put up with the discomfort of a long-haul flight purely because I'm looking forward to getting to my destination. I'll be happy to wave you off, Leigh, but will walk away shaking my head in bewilderment.]

**Tineke Hazel:** "Seeing as there was quite a response to your story of your Dad's funeral and we are talking more now about death and dying, may I make a suggestion about planning for a burial? And I will explain what I mean."

“My friend Janet has a son-in-law who is a fireman in Melbourne. He suggested to her to plan ahead in case of a fatal accident and have a Funeral parlour organised before an event as he found people panicking and not able to think clearly (naturally) at the time.

“With this advice in mind. I organised Brian's and my funeral with the local family-owned firm well ahead of time. It cost me nothing to keep this information on their files and they were very efficient in coming to get Brian's body with no fuss and very respectfully done, if you remember.

“My funeral arrangements are still with them and they have a plan of the Skillogalee cemetery where I wish to be buried next to my first husband and my son who died at the age of 17 in a motorbike accident.

“This may seem macabre but it really is being realistic and removes a lot of worry from the people left behind to bury you...”

[**PM:** Yes, good thinking. Frankly the last thing you want your loved ones to be doing after you die is to be worrying about hunting around for a burial site, or organising funeral arrangements. I don't have any sympathy for people who think that organising such events beforehand will only hasten their arrival. A total superstitious nonsense. We do need to think of the people we leave behind.]

“Your school accident reminded me of one I had in de Koningin Emma School, The Hague...we were playing leapfrog and as I was leapfrogging along, a boy ducked just as I was going to put my hands on his back and I crashed neatly on my face on the hard cement pavers...

“No one took me to a Dr or even sent me home.....no counselling in those days....”

**Rose Mitchell:** “That there may be various versions of **Perryscope** in circulation due to digital publishing is A Thing. I can imagine the dilemma that future historians of your fanzines will have to determine ‘which’ version was The One True Way.

“Those Middlemiss genes are fairly dominant; I can see the family resemblance between your father and you. Beards are different.”

[**PM:** I think you're being distracted by the hair and beards. I've always thought that I look more like my mother's side of the family.]

“I couldn't work out which way was North from your picture and Googlemaps was no help orienting me so I could follow your directions on how to get to school from your family home. [**PM:** North is towards the top of the picture. Googlemaps has the location of the Laura Primary School in the wrong place.] Kids in our day were a hardy lot or was it merely times were simpler, our parents more trusting of the world and maybe a tad naive to the dangers that might beset a child? If you survived childhood with no broken bones, or stitches you were a wimp, a molly-coddled baby. The walk to and from school was an adventure filled with climbing trees, battles with the kids from the next street and building forts in your neighbours' shrubbery.”

[**PM:** My primary school years all occurred pre-Beaumont kids (which I have mentioned before). After that tragic event I'm sure everything changed.]

“**Rohypnol** review intrigued me, you did it well although I don't think I am in the state of mind yet to read challenging novels but it is now on the back burner of interest list.”

“Another day. I thought **Official Secrets** was not so much of an expose about how whistle blowers are so badly treated but more a warning from The Brit Government: don't leak our secrets. From my perspective I also thought it was a little light on for hard doings and Kiera Knightley was the wrong actress for the part: I wasn't convinced she a scientist/surveillance expert, let alone one with a moral conscious.”

“**Sun Daughters-Sea Daughters:** I am sure I have read a similar short story with a similar theme of The Little Mermaid goes to Space but I cannot recall the name let alone the author. It was on an Award Finalist list which is how I came to read it. It's now annoying me I must hunt it down to compare.”

[**PM:** That would have been “The Mermaid Astronaut” by Yoon Ha Lee, which was a finalist for the 2021 Hugo Award for Best Short Story.]

**I also heard from:** **Charles Taylor** who also enjoyed the **Dublin Murders** TV series, but not as much as the books; **Nick Price**; **Jerry Kaufman** (who mentioned **Dublin Murders** as well and thought each book should have been a separate series); **Barbara O'Sullivan** who supplied us with the double pass to see **The Duke** and was happy that we enjoyed as much as she did; and **Martin Field** who was “both surprised and happy that you survived an apparently accident prone early life”; thank you one and all.

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Cover Notes: this photograph was taken by my wife Robyn as we were sitting having breakfast in Hobart, Tasmania in 2015. She had found an excellent deal in an apartment on the Hobart docks, right where the boats competing in the Sydney to Hobart race come in, and we had a long weekend wandering around the streets of the city, enjoying ourselves immensely.

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