

One Small Step

an anthology
of discoveries

Edited by Tehani Wessely

SAMPLE

Get the full book from your favourite retailer
(print and ebook)

First published in Australia in 2013
by FableCroft Publishing

<http://fablecroft.com.au>

This anthology © 2013 FableCroft Publishing

Cover design by Amanda Rainey
Design and layout by Tehani Wessely
Typeset in Sabon MT Pro and Footlight MT Light



Introduction ©2013 Marianne de Pierres
Always Greener ©2013 Michelle Marquardt
By Blood and Incantation ©2013 Lisa L. Hannett & Angela Slatter
Indigo Gold ©2013 Deborah Biancotti
Firefly Epilogue ©2013 Jodi Cleghorn
Daughters of Battendown ©2013 Cat Sparks
Baby Steps ©2013 Barbara Robson
Number 73 Glad Avenue ©2013 Suzanne J. Willis
Shadows ©2013 Kate Gordon
Original ©2013 Penelope Love
The Ships of Culwinna ©2013 Thoraiya Dyer
Cold White Daughter ©2013 Tansy Rayner Roberts
The Ways of the Wyrding Women ©2013 Rowena Cory Daniells
Winter's Heart ©2013 Faith Mudge
Sand and Seawater ©2013 Joanne Anderton & Rabia Gale
Ella and the Flame ©2013 Kathleen Jennings
Morning Star ©2013 D.K. Mok

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this book.

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry (pbk)

Title: One small step : an anthology of discoveries /
Tehani Wessely (ed.) ; Thoraiya Dyer ... [et al]
ISBN: 9780987400000 (pbk.)
9780987400017 (ebook)
Subjects: Short stories, Australian.
Science fiction, Australian.
Fantasy fiction, Australian.
Horror stories.
Dewey Number: A823.01

The editor gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance given by Marianne de Pierres, Elizabeth Disney, Dirk Flinthart, Amanda Rainey, and the amazing authors — I never cease to be impressed by the depth of talent and professionalism among our Australian authors.

As always, Tehani would like to thank her ever-enduring husband and children for their patience and support, and for keeping her away from the computer when she should be.

ALSO EDITED BY TEHANI WESSELY...

The Bone Chime Song and other stories by Joanne Anderton
(FableCroft Publishing)

Epilogue (FableCroft Publishing)

To Spin a Darker Stair (FableCroft Publishing)

After the Rain (FableCroft Publishing)

Australis Imaginarium (FableCroft Publishing)

Worlds Next Door (FableCroft Publishing)

New Ceres Nights (with Alisa Krasnostein, Twelfth Planet Press)

Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine
#4, #16, #27, #31, #36 (with Lucy Zinkiewicz) & **#37**
(Andromeda Spaceways Publishing Co-operative Ltd)

Shiny #4 and #5
(with Alisa Krasnostein and Ben Payne, webzine,
Twelfth Planet Press)

CONTENTS

Foreword — Marianne de Pierres

Always Greener	Michelle Marquardt	1
By Blood and Incantation	Lisa L. Hannett & Angela Slatter	25
Indigo Gold	Deborah Biancotti	41
Firefly Epilogue	Jodi Cleghorn	61
Daughters of Battendown	Cat Sparks	71
Baby Steps	Barbara Robson	85
Number 73 Glad Avenue	Suzanne J. Willis	109
Shadows	Kate Gordon	121
Original	Penelope Love	133
The Ships of Culwinna	Thoraiya Dyer	159
Cold White Daughter	Tansy Rayner Roberts	169
The Ways of the Wyrding Women	Rowena Cory Daniells	181
Winter's Heart	Faith Mudge	211
Sand and Seawater	Joanne Anderton & Rabia Gale	229
Ella and the Flame	Kathleen Jennings	247
Morning Star	D.K. Mok	257
Contributor Biographies		299

Foreword

Not so long ago, I attended a seminar on the topic of “Australian Victorian Female Crime Writers”. I was struck by how many there had been, but more importantly, how I had never heard of them. History can be very selective in what it chooses to publicise.

When invited by Tehani Wessely from Fablecroft Publishing to write this foreword, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to help ensure that the current generation of Australian female genre writers don’t suffer the same anonymity as their Victorian crime-writing sisters.

Within these covers is a collection of thought-provoking, entertaining and engrossing stories by a crop of talented writers who have earned the right, not only to be read, but to be remembered.

They have treated the concept of *One Small Step* imaginatively; between these pages you will find a gamut of speculative genres, from traditional fantasy, horror and science fiction to contemporary slipstream, and the telling of one small step towards either self-determination or self-realisation.

Reading this collection is like partaking in a strange intense dream that at the same time wonders if it might be real.

Mostly though, you cannot absorb *One Small Step* and be left unmoved. These are stories that provoke emotion; tales of prejudice, affliction, resurrection, survival and new beginnings. Each one so different from the last and yet all connected by characters with conviction.

Enjoy the feast between the covers, and then I urge you to talk to others about it. For it is only in our conversations and stories that we live on. It is in them that our legacy is transferred. It is in them that we make sense of the past, present and future. It is in them that the insights of our notable women storytellers will be recalled.

Marianne de Pierres
February 2013

COLD WHITE DAUGHTER

TANSY RAYNER ROBERTS

How did it begin?

She built me out of snow and sticks and stones. Smooth pebbles made my heart and lungs and brain. Frozen branches curved into my spine and wrists and finger bones. Then there was snow, packed tightly around the staves until it formed flesh and skin.

I breathed into the endless winter, and she caught my breath in her own lungs before giving it back, warm and perfumed. Again I breathed, this time on my own. I opened my eyes.

Surely everyone thinks their mother is beautiful, when they are first born. I saw her glittering eyes, her frosted skin and silver crown and knew her to be a queen, and a witch. But most of all, she was my mother, and I loved her for it.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

We lived in a tall, winding house of pointed spires and needle-sharp corners. Every room was narrow and high-ceilinged, and the cold air flooded through it. Frost patterned our flagstones, and thin icicles dripped from the window ledges. It was as well that she made me her daughter, since no one else could have thrived in this ice-lashed palace as well as I did.

We were not always alone. My mother's dwarves and wolves endlessly knocked at the door, demanding tasks, or bringing news. She delighted in them, in the furs they brought her, and the masculine grunts and growls they brought to our dinner table.

I learned to cut the corpses they brought into raw steaks for the chewing, and to boil the bones for gravy pies. We only had one stove

and I hated it, with its streaks of heat and billowing clouds of smoke. I only made hot gravy when the dwarves demanded it. My mother, like the wolves, ate meat raw.

Cakes pleased her, and sweetmeats, but I did not make those for her. Rather, she would create them with a twist of her wand and a laugh from her throat, to reward the menfolk for their service.

My eyes were clear enough that I could see the dwarves chew and swallow the knucklebones and gristle left over from my kitchen scraps, as if they were the daintiest of toffees and almond caramels. No wonder that my mother laughed with such delight. Nothing pleased her so well as to trick and to deceive.

I have never liked the taste of sugar. It is a false promise on the tongue.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

The statues hurt my heart. At first there were only a few, here and there throughout the house. A lion in the forecourt, pixies and naiads scattered through the rooms, elegant pieces of artistry in stone.

But more arrived, every year, then every month. Towards the end it was daily that new statues piled in to our narrow house, filling every room and tower and courtyard. They were not elegant artworks any more, but depictions of pain and fear and agony.

When my mother went abroad in that wide sledge of hers, drawn by reindeer, I was left alone in the house with the stone horrors. Sometimes I thought that the statues spoke to me, in voices so soft and painful that I could barely make the words out.

Sometimes I dreamed of them, and their sadness.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

Change, when it came, began as a whisper in the air. *On the move. He is on the move. The kings and queens are returning.*

I thought my mother was the only queen this land had ever known. But the whispers grew louder, even as the winter ebbed away to reveal sand and stone beneath the snow.

What would become of me, in this thaw? If my mother was winter and snow and ice then I was doubly so.

When I was not called to wait upon her, I spent much of my time in the room that my mother had always called the library, though most of the books were frozen fast to the shelves and had to be prised away with a knife if I wanted to read them. I did enjoy the pretty colours of their bindings, and the wide words gilded on to their spines, but that was nothing compared to the stories inside.

The books that I had read over the years told me of worlds beyond ours, of boarding schools and lacrosse, of coal-smoke and carriages. I always wondered if these stories were of the 'dreadful place' that my mother came from, before she created our wonderland.

In the books in the library, there were not just winters but springs and summers, autumns, oceans and deserts.

Only one statue stood here among the books, the sad centaur, and I found myself talking to him often, when I was certain Mother was not nearby to hear. I told him of my fears and worries, and made up poems for him about what I could see from the windows of our high and pointed home.

Sometimes I read to him, of the Wickedest Girl, the Dreadful Goblins, and the Secret Five. He seemed to like the stories as much as I did.

On other days, I fancied that he told me tales as well, about these kings and queens who were returning to our land, to thaw us all. The tales always ended badly, but I tried not to blame him for that.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

I felt the presence of the fair-haired boy before I saw him. It was as if a warm gust swept up the staircase, shaking us all to our foundations. The wolves were uneasy, and I heard them howling from the forecourt.

Of course I eavesdropped. Would you not? Listening to my mother's private conversations was the only thing that had kept me alive for so long — I needed to be ever cautious of her shifting

moods and tempers. Our life together has always been one of thin, fragile ice beneath my feet.

I hid by the winding banister of the stair as the boy approached my mother, the worst of the wolves snapping at his heels. I could smell fear on him, though he pretended to be brave.

"I've come, your Majesty," he burst out, his shabby fur coat wobbling around him as he hurried forward to greet her. "It's me, Cyril."

My mother sat at the far end of the hall with only a single lamp burning. The look on her face made it clear what she thought of him. Obviously he had never paid the slightest attention to her moods, or he would know better to strut before her as if he was something special.

When she spoke, it was in a terrible voice. "How dare you come alone? Did I not tell you to bring the others with you?"

His face fell, and he explained quickly how close they were, the brother and sisters and even the dog that he had apparently promised to my mother. If I had a sister, I should not treat her so lightly, but he seemed quite greedy to get rid of his own.

Then he said the words that made my mother shiver, she who never felt the cold.

"They say that He is on the move. The fairy of sand."

There was a flurry after that, of dwarves and wolves, of shouting and sending, and surely this boy's siblings would be meat all too soon. The sledge was to be readied, the one without bells, so that none could hear the queen and flee in fear.

The boy huddled against the wall, only now seeming to realise how little my mother was pleased with him. He asked for sweets and was given dried bread. My mother snapped at him when he spoke, drumming her fingers against the arm of her chair.

And then the sledge was ready and they were gone, queen and golden boy, dwarves and wolves all. I crept out of my hiding place and went about my chores, cleaning and tidying after them so that all would be proper for their return.

The ceiling dripped. Drip, drip, drip. The floor was wet in patches, and had not iced over the stone as was usual. The windows were wet with condensation, and at first I dared not look.

But I did, oh I did. I saw the snow falling from the frosted tree branches. When I flung the window open, I felt a warmth in my throat that made it hard to breathe.

Not thaw. This was spring.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

I cleaned and polished every room, and still my mother did not return. The window sills were wet with melting snow, and the courtyard was all shiny flagstones and a golden grit that I did not recognise at first.

Sand, the old books sang to me, of seashores and fish and chips, Blackpool rock and jolly good fun on the pier. *That is sand*.

I felt hot all over, as if my own skin would melt away. How real was I? If my mother forgot about me, would I pour through the flagstones and be gone in a few moments, like the icicles that used to cling to the edge of every turret and pointed roof of her house?

A night and day passed, and my mother did not come home. I slept near the sad centaur in the library, pretending that he petted me and called me dear thing. He reassured me that she was not dead, and winter would return.

When I breathed out, there was no cloud in the air.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

Heat came all in a roar, and the courtyard beneath the house rumbled with that roar. I looked out of a window to see a terrible creature scampering back and forth. Was this the 'fairy' that they were all so afraid of? It had a shambling, spider-shaped body, with long brown limbs and spiky whiskers, ears like a bat and the eyes of a snail.

When it reached each statue, it grew in a most alarming manner and made flubbing noises with its lips as it breathed out, bringing the stone to life.

There was dancing and celebration, shouts and cries, hugs and kisses, as friends and family were reunited, and the queen's spells were broken. A dog barked, over and over, scraping against my fears.

I hid in the library as warmth spread from room to room, but I could feel it coming nearer. I stood by the window, wishing and wishing and thinking cold thoughts, remembering my mother and the ice and the snow and oh, I could not breathe if it was all heat and fire and pulses and skin and sand in this world, I could not.

My breath came raggedly as I pressed my hands back against the window, wishing that the glass was ice, wishing myself cold, cold, cold.

A girl broke into the room at a gallop. She wore strange clothes, not a fur in sight, and her hair was swinging in little bunches. "Psammead, Psammead!" she cried out. "I've found Mr Jinks! Oh, do come quick!"

And thus I learned the name of my murderer. I remembered a book in the library, about a sand-fairy who loathed the cold and complained constantly about his whiskers. Was he the same creature who had ruled this land once, before my mother brought the sweet relief of ice and snow?

If he was real, then everything in storybooks was real.

I stayed as still as I could, no longer breathing, as the sand-fairy was carried upstairs in the arms of another dreadful child, a girl with short curly hair who was dressed like a boy. The noisy dog snapped at their heels, barking with triumph, and the creature named Psammead shook hot, gritty sand from its feet on to my mother's frosted carpet.

"Are you sure this is your centaur, Anthea?" asked the short-haired girl, struggling to keep the Psammead in her arms and to quiet her dog at the same time. "Do be good, Champion."

Heat rolled off the creature in waves as he leaned over my centaur and huffed upon him in a thoroughly undignified fashion, turning his ice and stone features into coughing, laughing flesh.

The girl embraced the centaur and he hugged her back. "You did it, Anthea," he said in delight. "You saved us all."

“Not yet, Mr Jinks,” she laughed, shining with joy. “There’s still a battle, isn’t there, darling Psammead? We have to defeat the Frost Witch, if my brothers haven’t done it already.”

“Indeed,” said the creature in his scraping, hot voice. More sand fell to the floor. “We must ride, children.”

“Oh,” said the girl who was dressed as a boy. “There’s one more statue. Look.”

I did not breathe, did not weep or sigh. I remained as still as I could, thinking cold thoughts, even when the dog ran to me, barking and slobbering. I knew that the old sand-fairy’s hot breath would render me into nothing but water on the ground.

Kill me, then, I thought. Let me melt.

After a moment of gazing at me with his huge, limpid snail’s eyes, the sand-fairy huffed and muttered to himself. “No life in this one,” he said. “It is only ice. Come, let us call the unicorns and to battle.”

I waited, still and unbreathing as the intruders left the room. Finally, I heard their merry voices from below as they left the house, planning aloud who would ride upon whose back, on their way to join the battle and kill my mother.

These children who styled themselves kings and queens, they would be back, naming the house their own. Or else the sand-fairy himself would take up residence. I stared at the sand scattered on the floor, all heat and grit.

My mother would lose the battle. How could she not, with all of this wretched sand spilling across the ground outside, the summer sun in the sky and hot magics in the air? Four children, a sand-fairy and a dog, all straight from the pages of the books she froze hard to her library shelves. Of course they would win.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

I left the house, the courtyard now empty of statues, and did not look back as I ran into the forest, hoping that I ran far from the battle and not into it. Surely I would find one last patch of winter snow to keep me safe. One frosted branch, one spindly icicle or stalactite.

Where the snow melted, there was nothing but sand, everywhere.

My tears froze before they touched my cheeks and hands — I was still ice, all the way to my core. The sand-fairy had said so.

I ran until the trees ended and the lamp-posts began: an endless expanse of cold iron poles twisted into beautiful shapes: lanterns lined up across the Waste. My mother had made this forest of metal, when she first stepped into this land and began her work, turning sand into ice and snow. She planted fragments from another world into the earth, and watched it grow and seed itself.

The lamp-posts, I thought, must come from the same world as the horrid children, and the books on my mother's library shelves. A world of ginger beer and glacé cherries, of train timetables and boarding school, of hols and ices and tins of pineapple.

There was snow in that world. There had to be, or the entire Chalet School series made no sense. Perhaps I could find a home there, if I could only discover which of a thousand lamp-posts was the one that led the way to the cupboard beneath the stairs that was found at the beginning and end of every Secret Five book.

This desert of kings and queens and centaurs and fairies had nothing to offer me now.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

They killed my mother. I knew the moment when this happened, because my heart broke into pieces, slipping and sliding inside my ribcage. The pieces did not melt, but only because I pressed my hands to my chest and begged them to stay cold, to be ice and snow. I no longer breathed, and there was no pulse in my veins, but I still walked on cracking knees and aching limbs beneath the iron curves of the lamp-post forest.

The sky grew dark, and the lanterns sprang alight, every one of them. I laid my hand against one iron stem and left frosted fingertips there.

I staggered on, deeper into the maze of lamp-posts, and only now did I cry for my mother instead of myself. Drops of ice fell from my eyes and melted on the damp sand at my feet.

Ice, ice, ice. I called up everything I knew about my mother and her powers. I called the winter and the snow. Not into the world, which was too big for me to change, but into my own veins. *If not snow, let me be stone.*

Let me be a statue until winter comes again.

And so, in a final breath of my mother's magic, that is what I became.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

Time passed, and as a statue I knew none of it. The last of the snow melted from the land, to be replaced by hot sands and fierce winds. There were no more winters.

I might have stayed that way forever, but for a single cool breeze that whipped around my ears, and melted my hard limbs for a moment. I heard voices, laughter on the wind, and I awoke.

They did not see me, the kings and queens. They were older now, wrapped up in silken robes and burnouses, seated upon camels. I wondered what had happened to the reindeer. Perhaps they were the statues now.

I watched as they called to each other, setting up a colourful tent to shield their blistered and sunburnt skin from the fierce sun above. Roger was the eldest, the one who had always been brave, and Cyril was the younger boy, the one who had betrayed them all to my mother, but was then forgiven. He appeared to be growing a moustache, which curled at both ends.

The girl with short hair was no more minded to dress as a lady now that she was old, and she wore a bright turban upon her short dark curls. Hilary, they called her, which was as good a name for a king as a queen. She lifted the now elderly and wheezing dog out of her saddlebag, and gave him water. He sweated horribly, and smelled like camel.

"Sand gets everywhere," said Roger irritably, and quarreled with his younger sister Anthea about whether they should drink hot tea with milk or lemon on such "a beastly day".

"I miss rain," said Cyril in a quieter voice. "Do you remember what it was like, just before we fell through the cupboard beneath the stairs? We thought it horrid, that we couldn't play outside. Oh, what I wouldn't give for a spot of rain now!"

"They are predicting there will be no crops this year," said Anthea, unpacking the picnic. "I say, does anyone want some Turkish Delight? There's a whole box of it."

All of the kings and queens made dreadful faces at their sister.

"Give it to Champion," said Roger in distaste.

The dog gave them all a long-suffering look.

"It was around here somewhere, wasn't it?" said Cyril, leaping to his feet. "Don't you remember? All these lamp-posts. There was a large snow drift, and we fell..."

"No snow now, you fool," said Hilary.

"I wonder how the war turned out," said Roger. "The other war, I mean. Back home. If it lasted four years, I would have gone myself."

"We did fight a war," said Cyril crossly. "Swords and all! Don't you remember? Surely that business with the witch and the sand-fairy was war enough for anyone."

Anthea burst into tears. "Do you remember what our mother looked like? I don't think I do."

I wanted to hate them, the four monsters who had killed my mother and destroyed my world. But for all their long limbs and curly moustaches, the Secret Five were still children at heart.

Then they were out of the tent, groping through the dust, looking around every lamp-post and rock, searching for that wooden door of theirs. Even the dog joined them, his head bowed against the fierce sun. Finally, he yapped.

"Here!" said Hilary. "Oh, good boy, Champion. I can smell mothballs."

"I smell roast dinner," said Roger. "And rain."

“You don’t think,” said Anthea. “Oh, you don’t think, do you, that it might be the very same day that we left?”

Then they were gone, all of them. Champion went first, worming into a hole in the ground barely large enough to let him through, and then the girls after him, pushing and giggling and gasping with hope.

Cyril was the last to leave. He stood there in his silken finery, gazing around at the forest of lamp-posts. His eye settled for a moment on me, on what he thought was a stone statue. I thought for a moment that he smiled beneath that ridiculous upper lip of his, and then he was gone too, scrabbling his way through into his storybook world.

Mothballs and rain. I smelled them too.

No more kings and queens.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

Was it my destiny now to return to my mother’s house, to take up her crown, and to make the winter come again? To give snow and ice back to the land, to banish the hot sand one last time?

I could do it. I knew that I could. I saw exactly how to draw on the old powers and become that which I had always feared. I could shape myself into the new Frost Witch, and there would be no kings and queens to stop me.

But oh, the smell of mothballs and rain.

If they could have storybook adventures in other worlds, these awful children, why could I not do the same? I could have *Kaffee und Kuchen* at the Chalet School, or play lacrosse at Malory Towers. I could befriend a bear at Paddington Station, and drink bottled lemonade in a rowing boat.

Couldn’t I?

Reader, I followed them. I dug a hole in the sand, let it swallow me whole, and fell through to a small triangular room full of spiders and coats. The cupboard under the stairs. I climbed out of there and found myself in a hallway, surrounded by staircases and the echoing voices of the children as they ran every which way through the house,

celebrating their return.

On unsteady legs, I found my way to a window and watched rain gush down across a bright green lawn. Such wetness, cleaning the world anew. Eventually, the rain slowed and stopped, and still I stared at the gleaming, sodden grass.

My feet hurt. I was real, and this world was real, and my mother would never find me here, not in a thousand years of searching.

My mother was dead.

My tears were salt water falling on the backs of my pink, pink hands. I had never tasted such salt before. But this world was full of tastes and smells, of peppermint and floor polish, of damp walls and bread rolls baking in an oven. So many possibilities for adventure.

I breathed warm, damp air into my fleshy lungs.

And life began.

∞¥∞Ω∞¥∞

Like it? Get the full book from your favourite retailer
(print and ebook)!

Epilogue

edited by Tehani Wessely

ISBN: 978-0-9807770-5-5

ep-i-logue: an ending that serves as a comment on or conclusion to what has happened.

Climate change, natural disaster, war and disease threaten to destroy all we know. Predictions of the future are bleak. But does the apocalypse really mean the end of the world? Is there no hope for a future that follows?

Twelve writers take on the end of the world and go beyond, to what comes next.

CONTENTS

“A memory trapped in light” by Joanne Anderton

“Time and tide” by Lyn Battersby

“Fireflies” by Steve Cameron

“Sleeping Beauty” by Thoraiya Dyer

“The Fletcher Test” by Dirk Flinthart

“Ghosts” by Stephanie Gunn

“Sleepers” by Kaia Landelius

“Solitary” by Dave Luckett

“Cold comfort” by David McDonald

“The Mornington Ride” by Jason Nahrung

“What books survive” by Tansy Rayner Roberts

“The last good town” by Elizabeth Tan



The Bone Chime Song and Other Stories

by Joanne Anderton

ISBN: 978-0-9807770-9-3

Enter a world where terrible secrets are hidden in a wind chime's song; where crippled witches build magic from scrap; and the beautiful dead dance for eternity

The Bone Chime Song and Other Stories collects the finest science fiction and horror short stories from award-winning writer Joanne Anderton. From mechanical spells scavenging a derelict starship to outback zombies and floating gardens of bone, these stories blur the lines between genres. A mix of freakish horror, dark visions of the future and the just plain weird, Anderton's tales will draw you in — but never let you get comfortable.

**The Bone Chime Song
Mah Song
Shadow of Drought
Sanaa's Army
From the Dry Heart to the Sea
Always a Price
Out Hunting for Teeth
Death Masque
Flowers in the shadow of the Garden
A Memory Trapped in Light
Trail of Dead
Fence Lines
Tied to the Waste**

**With an Introduction by Australian
horror luminary Kaaron Warren**



*...follows a fine horror lineage from Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery* through *The Wickerman*... – Scary Minds*

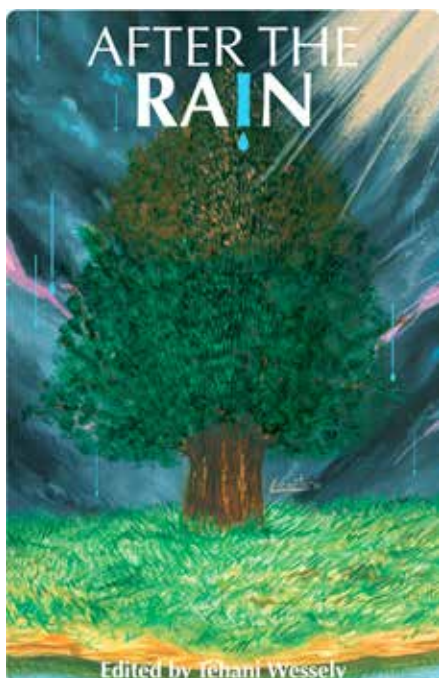
Dark, unexpected and tightly written, Anderton makes a fantasy world seem completely real, while using a premise that spirals from a shadowed and lonely place. – ASif!

...a stunning descent into dark decay and the grisly madness of eternity ... a chaotic and beautiful fairy tale with a patina of gangrene. – Specusphere

...Anderton has constructed an exuberant and positively traditional SF story with strong female central characters... – ASif!

[Anderton] has a real mastery of the surreal ... and somehow manages to make the surreal seem normal ... reading this book will fill you with horror, wonder, awe, sorrow, delight, surprise and admiration.” – Kaaron Warren

fablecroft.com.au



After the Rain
edited by Tehani Wessely
ISBN: 978-0-9807770-2-4

The aftermath of rain, be it showers, storms or floods, can change the landscape. In this book, fifteen of Australia's best and brightest speculative fiction authors offer literal and figurative interpretations of what follows rain, in this reality and others.

From the earliest of bible stories to World War II Germany, from tiny creatures grown of raindrops to alien planets and future worlds, *After the Rain* considers the changes rain can bring, if one steps slight left of reality.

from the dry heart to the sea by joanne anderton
powerplant by dave luckett
daughters of the deluge by lyn battersby
when the bone men come by peter cooper
the birth of water cities by angela rega
wet work by jason nahrung
fruit of the pipal tree by thoraiya dyer
europe after the rain by lee battersby
heaven by jo langdon
visitors by peter m ball
mouseskin by kathleen jennings
offerings by suzanne j willis
the shadow on the city of my sky by robert hoge
my flood husband by sally newham
eschaton and coda by dirk flinthart

"...hopeful and depressing, and thoroughly engrossing." — *ASif!*

fablecroft.com.au

Australis Imaginarium

edited by Tehani Wessely

ISBN: 978-0-9807770-0-0

Boasting original cover art by Shaun Tan and containing twelve all-Australian, award-winning stories by some of the island continent's finest speculative fiction writers, *Australis Imaginarium* challenges you to reconsider what you think you know about Australia and its inhabitants, old and new.

Australis Imaginarium collects work from across the past two decades, showcasing Australian storytelling at its very best.



“Once a Month, on a Sunday” by Ian McHugh

“Night Heron’s Curse” by Thoraiya Dyer

“Hunter of Darkness, Hunter of Light” by Michael Pryor

“A Pig’s Whisper” by Margo Lanagan

“Stealing Free” by Deborah Biancotti

“Suffer the Little Children” by Rowena Cory Daniells

“Virgin Jackson” by Marianne de Pierres

“The Claws of Native Ghosts” by Lee Battersby

“The Jacaranda Wife” by Angela Slatter

“The Dark Under the Skin” by Dirk Strasser

“Red Ochre” by Lucy Sussex

“Passing the Bone” by Sean Williams

“... stories authored by Australian mastercraftspeople ... each one is perfectly crafted ... speculative fiction at [its] finest...” —

Suz’s Space

fablecroft.com.au

Worlds Next Door
edited by Tehani Wessely
ISBN: 978-0-9807770-1-7

What you have here is not a book, but a key to worlds that exist under your bed, in your cupboard, in the dark of night when you're sure you're being watched. What you have is a passport to the worlds next door.



Containing 25 bite-sized stories for 9-13 year olds by Australian authors including Paul Collins, Michael Pryor, Pamela Freeman, Dirk Flinthart, Tansy Rayner Roberts and Jenny Blackford, *Worlds Next Door* is perfect for the budding reader.

“...a completely satisfying, wonderful collection...” — Aurealis Xpress

“There are so many excellent stories in this collection...” — Daniel Simpson

“...a fab little anthology...” — ASif!

“...a book that gives us tempting little slices of cleverness in the realm of magical writing...” — Kids’ Book Review

“I love the diversity of this collection.” — Kids’ Book Capers

“An engaging collection of speculative fiction ... this is an excellent collection for both the library and the English faculty.” — ReadPlus

fablecroft.com.au

Look out for our ebook-only collection and more
FableCroft books at our website:

<http://fablecroft.com.au/>

The Bone Chime Song and Other Stories by Joanne Anderton

The Mocklore Chronicles by Tansy Rayner Roberts

Splashdance Silver

Liquid Gold

Ink Black Magic

Isles of Glory trilogy by Glenda Larke

The Aware

Gilfeather

The Tainted

Worlds Next Door edited by Tehani Wessely

Australis Imaginarium edited by Tehani Wessely

After the Rain edited by Tehani Wessely

Epilogue edited by Tehani Wessely

One Small Step edited by Tehani Wessely

Focus 2012: highlights of Australian short fiction
edited by Tehani Wessely

Canterbury 2100: Pilgrimages in a New World
edited by Dirk Flinthart

Path of Night by Dirk Flinthart

"Sanction" by Dirk Flinthart

"Flower and Weed" by Margo Lanagan

To Spin a Darker Stair

by Catherynne M Valente & Faith Mudge

Coming soon...

Guardian by Jo Anderton

Insert Title Here... edited by Tehani Wessely

Cranky Ladies of History

edited by Tansy Rayner Roberts & Tehani Wessely