

Writers Connect

Winter 2013 – Festival Edition

The middle of winter is the perfect time to escape into the world of books. For some of our readers, this means huddling up with blankets and reading well into the night. For others, it means dressing up and braving the cold to gather with book-lovers. In the Northern hemisphere, cold weather signals the oncoming festive times. Down this end of the globe, arts aficionados start looking out for festival programs in newspapers. The Sydney Writers' Festival in May starts the winter festival season and it ends shortly after the Melbourne Writers Festival in August. These two festivals are generally the bookends of winter for me. I enjoy hearing local and international authors and artists swap ideas and deliberate over questions, but mostly I love to hear them read their work.

This year's festival has been captured by our contributors in this special 'Festival' edition of Writers Connect. Our Chair, Sharon Rundle, writes about the [Publishing Seminar](#) she attended, and shares news, changes and hints from the publishing industry for budding writers. I would like to make special mention of our second contributor, Tara McLennan, and welcome her as Assistant Editor of Writers Connect. Tara's hard work is evident in this issue and I'm sure our readers will enjoy her writing as much as I do. In this issue, Tara takes us along with her on the fascinating journey to a 'Sane New World', an event in which writer, comedian, and now mental health campaigner Ruby Wax spoke openly about depression.

Roanna Gonsalves writes about the fragile [webs of song](#) between her experiences on a panel at the Sydney Writers' Festival Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, and the very different setting of a lecture at Goa University. Finally, alumni writer Susanne Gervay visited Singapore for the [Asian Festival of Children's Content](#). Her piece should come with a warning that it will make you want to attend next year's festival, after reading about the variety of authors and genres celebrated at the festival.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Writers Connect! Please send us your submissions for upcoming issues (rosalind.bellamy@alumni.uts.edu.au) and share news, opportunities and events by email or on the UTS Writers' Alumni [Facebook group](#). Finally, congratulations to our alumni with new publications, launches and awards.

Roz Bellamy © 2013

Guest Editor of *Writers Connect*

Publishing Seminar

The era of digital publishing was heatedly discussed at this

year's Sydney Writers' Festival. A panel of writers and publishers gathered at NSW State Library to share arguments, advice and new knowledge on changes to the book industry. Sharon Rundle captures the exchange of ideas. [Read more...](#)



The Asian Festival of Children's Content

A network of talented multicultural storytellers gathered at the Asian Festival of Children's Content this year. Susanne Gervay reflects on the stimulating symposium that explored new, traditional, and multi-media forms of children's entertainment. [Read more...](#)



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Lying on a Beach Towel – by Libby Sommer

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Ruby Wax: Losing It

American comedian and writer Ruby Wax gave an exhilarating talk at the Sydney Opera House on the topic of depression. As a guest of the Writers' Festival, Wax discussed an illness she's studied extensively and experienced personally. Tara McLennan writes about this witty, engaging performance. [Read more...](#)



Thoughts on webs of song

Roanna Gonsalves ruminates on themes evoked by a panel of writers at the Blue Mountains Varuna program of the Sydney Writers' Festival. As contributors to the anthology *Joyful Strains: Making Australia Home*, panelists drew on experiences of diaspora, belonging, and the bittersweet creation of home. Here, Gonsalves gives lyrical expression to the cross-cultural voices of Australia. [Read more...](#)



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