

POETRY



**WALTZING WITH JACK DANCER: A SLOW DANCE WITH CANCER**  
 Geoff Goodfellow  
 Wakefield Press, \$29.95

"THERE were 60 to 80 cigarettes a day/ for 15 years," writes Adelaide poet Geoff Goodfellow, and this book records where a routine like that can lead. In January 2008, he was diagnosed with throat cancer. First, he had the tumour removed, then came chemo and radiation therapy. The tumour was close to his vocal cords, so he also had a voicebox inserted.

The voice of these poems is direct and clear. Although the title speaks of a dance, the more traditional metaphor of the fight is employed equally as much. In Goodfellow's case, the earlier part of his life fills out that image and reawakens it. He was once a boxer and an old opponent who hears he is sick comes to visit: "I've got news for cancer/ Geoff Goodfellow doesn't run from cancer/ He was silly enough not to run from me."

Goodfellow, a guest at the Melbourne Writers Festival, also fights with his doctors and nutritionists. The longest piece, *The Seventh Doctor*, shows an invigorating lack of deference for those mighty persons but also respect where it is due. The humour and lack of self-pity are exemplary.

But the poetry is only one of the ways the story is told. Accompanying the verse are colour photographs by Randy Larcombe. Cool, clear and unsparing, the images emphasise the solitude of illness, often showing Goodfellow alone in the austere settings of hospital.

Goodfellow's daughter provides a different voice, with a prose piece at the end that tells in its own engaging manner how her father's illness affected her final year at school.

OWEN RICHARDSON

bookstore. 20 per cent of the reader had gone and with their shops that considerable book stock remains. The next afternoon I went looking for publishers in their housing, focused on Melbourne and did not go for a large range, while independent bookshops did not necessarily order in great bulk. Kline says he is disappointed about the fate of his novel, which he considers his best so far. "It's almost getting to a stage where it's not the publisher or the editor or their local band of readers who make the choice about what gets published and read. It's getting down to the influence of who controls an ever-shrinking retail presence and for those few left to decide if your price tag is big enough to warrant a presence on their shelves. Would the fighting be spent on a supermarket shelf?"

Commercial reality is that if a writer sells more than 1000 copies of a book in the small scheme, the editors are now saying, "Well, that's not really enough of a return, we'll pass on this author and stick to a known brand, a major prize winner, established names or support fiction." That makes it tough for emerging Australian writers like myself and them to get a presence, especially when the big publishing houses are following their own formula. "Patience and Pat Richardson had paid for the contract and Kline confirmed he had retained the rights to the book, which he would offer to smaller, independent publishers."

Seagulls in flight

MICHAEL O. SMITH Melbourne  
 looking to replace in diary and this

time it is not the best judge. Business plans should be in place. I added for a double check. The book club had been back with a list and would be back in August. Two months ago when the 1st Edition Place was Chapter 10, I was a publisher. Instead, I made that book from scratch, including the fact to find and get a publisher. They brought me back to my own table. I'm selling books for 20% with a long sale rate. October.

Go ahead for P

ONE of the most successful groups was from a company of Progress, selling books for 20% with a long sale rate. The success of the company is based on the volume of sales. I'm selling books for 20% with a long sale rate. The success of the company is based on the volume of sales.

POETRY

Reversing

I was reversing out of my driveway  
 & signalled to a bloke  
 to move his car which was in my way  
 he was a young man      twenty -  
 maybe twenty-two      lots of bottle  
 blond hair      tousled & spiky  
 & his car was about as old  
 as him  
 he was parked in a No Parking zone  
 & it pissed me off  
 as i turned out i drew alongside him —  
 rolled down my window & growled  
 can't you read you idiot      it says  
 no parking  
 he looked at me momentarily & said  
 chill out dude  
 i set the car into drive  
 took a left turn      slowly —  
 & drove down the road laughing  
 he was right  
 of course.

Geoff Goodfellow