

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 was looking for publishers in their listing, focused on independent and did not go for a large range, while independent bookshops did not necessarily order in great bulk. Kinn 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-diminishing retail presence and for those few left to decide if your price tag is big enough to warrant a presence on their shelves. Sound like fighting for space 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 others 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 Kinn confirmed he had retained the rights to the book, which he would offer to smaller, independent publishers."

Seagulls in flight

MICHAEL O. another Melbourne bookshop to choose to diversify and this

time it is not the book budget business plan. Bookshop to Williams (added by a double check) the book shop that have been with a the most to would have had no. August 2008 months ago when the 1st. Yellow Pages was Chapman has written publishers. Instead, it books that make from income, including the book to find and get and understand. They throughout, books in and sports clubs. Clay selling books for 20 years with a long side rate October.

Go ahead for P

ONE of the most recent 2008 group was from company of Progress, selling books for books like books with an a month. The recently Australian Copyright Commission to have of the volume to see impact on copyright supply of books. The included these would knowledge of copyright

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