

## Writers' Alumni 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event

What a huge thrill to meet our Writers' Alumni at the 10th Anniversary Event! It was great to catch up with those I've met before and to meet new members of our writers' alumni as well as UTS Alumni who had come along out of interest or curiosity. It was wonderful to see you all chatting and enjoying the canapés, wine, tea and coffee.

Bronwyn Mehan, Nigel Bartlett, Delia Falconer and Bem Le Hunte were our panel speakers. I noticed that everyone was listening intently as Nigel told us how bus stops can be inspiring, Bronwyn spoke of her deep love for the short story form, Delia recommended a biblio therapist and Bem questioned whether any knowledge is useless—of course the speakers had a lot more to say about writing, editing, publishing, creative intelligence and entrepreneurial skills.

Libby Sommer won first prize in our Short Form Writing competition for her short short story "It's Pot Luck", congratulations, Libby, and also to Steve Corner whose story "Funeral" was commended. Both stories are published on this page.

Judges Tara McLennan and Fiona Campbell had the difficult task of choosing the winning and commended stories but also the pleasure of announcing them at the event and presenting the prize of a UTS Pen to Libby Sommer.

Kevin Cheung, Editor of UTS 'Tower' magazine, took terrific photos at the event and gave us permission to reproduce them in this issue. One of Kevin's photos and an article were published in *Tower*, Summer 2014, Issue 11.

Huge thanks to Rosanne Hunt, Deputy Director, Alumni Relations & Communications, for giving such a warm welcome address that made us feel part of the wider Alumni network and for assisting with funding from our Alumni Office; and to Fiona Zhu who quietly and efficiently organised everything. Thanks to Rehmana Khan for organising emails, online invitation and registration; and Jen Waters for her assistance. Thanks to James Harradine and the UTS Co-op Book Shop for providing books for sale. Finally thanks to Sameer and the Aerial UTS Function Centre for setting up the room, the delicious canapés and beverages.

It was a great night for all who braved the wet, windy weather and traffic to join us in celebrating ten years of continued growth. I trust you enjoyed it as much as I did.

Here's to the next 10 years!

Sharon  
Chair UTS Writers' Alumni





The winning entry in our Writers' Alumni Short form story competition is by Libby Sommer. Steve Corner's entry was commended by the judges. Congratulations, Libby and Steve.

#### It's Pot Luck When You Move Into a Unit



*A nice quiet weekend?* the woman downstairs said. *What do you mean?* I said, through the open back door, a bag of rubbish in each hand. She smoothed her ironing on the board and said, *They weren't around over the weekend—with the baby.* She looked happy. *I'm lucky living on the top floor,* I said. She nodded towards the other side of the building. *Jim isn't so lucky—he's got the woman upstairs,* she said, *when he plays the piano and she thumps on the floor.* She put the iron back on its stand. *She's heavy-footed, that woman. Bang, bang, bang. I hear her coming down the stairs every morning at six, and the slam of the front door.*

That night the wind knocked my vase off the window ledge. I lay awake wondering if the noise of the smash had woken up the people underneath—the ones whose barbecuing sends smoke and disgusting meat smells into my unit. Nothing clings to your furniture like the stink from last week's burnt fat. *Sorry about the crash,* I muttered to the floor, *it was the*

*wind.*

Libby Sommer ©

#### Steve Corner's untitled short-short story:

Generations, if you go in for that sort of thing, must be unhappy in their own way.

His mother nailed the pause, so did his aunt. His sister, his brother, both naturals. Behind him, the family blood diluted down a single file alive with church adjusted tics and fidgets. The head of this caterpillar was dead.

At the coffin he became confused; what exactly is this bit for? You can have a love for grandpa without a love for daddy, which isn't what the term implies. He pumped up the requisite memories and scratched himself out of each one to leave only grandpa. He thought about what grandpa did, but the war, granny, and his mother had already been covered.

He tried until his 21st century thirtywhatever soul couldn't hack it anymore. At last, he looked down at the dead man and did what came naturally, he thought of just himself. He cried.

But now, inside the coffin, nothing is hard to take. The dearly beloved pound and yell and ultimately are held at bay by his whitening fists and grandpa's final face which, mashed up against his shoulder, pulls a showy hide-and-seek smile.

Steve Corner ©