

**April's Poetry Writing Workshop led by Ray Lee**  
**Report by Annie Clouston**

Imagine this! Someone making us work hard in the brain department on a Saturday morning. Six of us did, and we all produced some good work. Gold stars all round. Ray took us through various aspects of creating words in ways that intensify their impact, as poetry should. We followed exercises in rhythm, imagery, metaphor, simile, personification, conciseness, emotion and subjectivity, and finding your own voice as a poet, using examples from our great poets like Dylan Thomas, Sylvia Plath, Langston Hewitt and Wilfred Owen. Then encouraged us to have a go! In the personification section I managed this abject bit of doggerel:

Toe!

Toe, toe! You hurt me so...

I think you are malign.

All I did was stub you

And then whine and whine and whine.

Ray was kind: "You have something there to build on". My fellow aspiring poets tended to the more aesthetic, although their subjectivity was there in spades, particularly one participant who gave away his fascination with motors in a number of the exercises.

Many thanks to Ray for his meticulous preparation and for his own poems which showed us the way. Here is one that exemplifies much of what he was trying to get us to do. Its personal, poignant, delightful.

Hen

Although the sky was

Cloudless and calm,

The sun soothing

And sympathetic,

The summerhouse peaceful.

My discontent was septic

My foot without several toes

Ached with the continuity

Of Schoenberg.

A disjointed thrum thrum

And bloody thrum.

Who could sleep to that rhythm?

Then she came with red feathers glowing

A soft throaty hypnotic chuckle

Expressing her contentment.

To my surprise she settled on the grass

Like an animated dumpling

And continued to

Fuss her ticking call gently

Until I slept.