I'm not an academic, though I have been and sometimes am a teacher. I don't give lectures. Nor am I a public speaker - though I've sometimes been a panellist at poetry seminars and festivals. I'll present this illustrated talk as a poet about to be a novice 'public lecturer'.

I started by wondering what effect 'being a local' might have had on my poetry writing. This led me to think that I might present a chronological record of publication covering my life-in-poetry & art over the last four decades. Publication has happened in spite of, or perhaps because of, moving around from place to place. I hope that this anecdotal slide show will produce some kind of synthesis that might be germane to poetry-writing in general. Now that it's compiled I'm not sure that it has much to do with the topic of locality but perhaps some useful slant will manifest. I'll mainly outline a simple history of my publications. I won't include a record of employment nor will I cover all the political activities in which I've engaged. There won't be much analysis. I won't be reading any poetry. Mostly, I hope that you enjoy it.

This is the first and last time I'll do anything like this exposition.

Susan Schultz recently called “the odd feeling of visiting your past - self-tourism.” So far, I've managed to avoid autobiography or memoir though this talk brings me in touch with it.
I'm actually suspicious of self-historicization. I love something the North American poet Charles Bernstein said in a poem - "Everyone is talking about memoir but I just want to forget. I want a poetry that helps me to forget what I never knew.\slash Show me the baloney and I will immerse myself in last season's mausoleums."

So, on with the baloney -
I've relocated many times. Since the beginning of my life in Seymour, Victoria I have had at least forty addresses. My childhood was an itinerant one in different Australian states (that is, states as places - Victoria, Queensland - not states as conditions of being) and in my adult life I've moved approximately every four years. Sometimes I've moved on after three years, sometimes I've stayed a year or two longer. None of this includes my various three or six month stints in foreign countries. I don't have a notion of a "home" or a "home town" apart from the fact that in my adult life I have chosen 'Sydney' as the place to return to from my interstate and foreign excursions, and as a city to relocate within. I wasn't born there and I didn't grow up there - I moved there in 1968. But what I'm getting to is that the concept 'local' is in flux and, in my experience, it would be very difficult to claim a personal authenticity in relation to whatever point on the global positioning system I happen to be at any given time, that is anything as authentically local in the constructed human world. Of course - 'authentic local' flora and fauna are possible. Or used to be.

The title for my first collection of poems - *Sureblock* - came to me in a dream.

Its production was an underground activity. Three of my friends and I let ourselves in to a big commercial printery where one of us worked, at Moorabbin or Wantirna or somewhere like that in Melbourne, late at night when the printery was closed for business. We typeset, laid out, made metal plates and printed the book on the printery's discarded paper and card offcuts using whatever ink was in the big offset printing press that one of us knew how to operate. Then we collated it by hand. The next day we folded, stapled, and guillotine-trimmed the book in a friend's flat in Middle Park. And, hey presto - my first small book of poems - 24 pages, a print run of a couple of hundred.
There was no author name on the cover and no biographical note, no date and no isbn.

The title page carried an anti-copyright offering: 'if anyone wants these poems use them'

It was dedicated to two North American real-life female outlaws - Cattle Annie and Little Breeches. Beneath the dedication there was a well-known line from Antonin Artaud - 'all writing is pigshit'. In lower case on the final page - 'poems by pamela jb brown'

Obviously, the 'local' determines the details of your politics. For instance, the US and Australia (whose military force consisted mainly of young conscripts) were engaged in an unpopular war against communism in Vietnam until the mid 1970s. For around thirteen years, until I left Brisbane in 1968, I lived on military bases. My father was engaged in training soldiers for war. I had become anti-militarist in my high school years when I was also close friends with the daughter of the secretary of the Brisbane Communist Party and her parents. I discovered much about Communism in those days but had ventured even further by the early 70s towards yippies and anarchism. ('Yippies' were the [Youth International Party](#) - a
radical youth-oriented, highly theatrical, anti-authoritarian countercultural revolutionary offshoot of the free speech and anti-war movements of the 1960s.)

I associate my books with particular events or places, and during this period I lived in various locations - Paddington, Darlinghurst & Surry Hills in Sydney & Carlton in Melbourne.

The poems in Sureblock were used - they turned up unsolicited in Mejane, a women's liberation newspaper, and in magazines, and in a short film by Julie Jansen. Then several years later, in 1977, I adapted the Cattle Annie & Little Breeches poems into a short film script and made a video, together with film director Gillian Leahy. The video, Outlaw Queens, was screened nationally in Australia and travelled to the Venice Biennale in 1981. It was screened again in June this year at Artspace in Sydney in a retrospective of 1970s videos. (http://www.scribd.com/doc/143131403/Sureblock.)

The Sureblock book was made when we were coming out of the psychedelic era and my contemporaries and I willingly embraced the congeries of experimentation, sexual liberation and societal challenges that were unfolding in the world-at-large. It was a time when young people experienced great feelings of possibility, spontaneity and hope, as if anything countercultural that we imagined could be realised.

Around this time I was invited to make an artwork at The Yellow House, in Macleay Street, at Kings Cross. The Yellow House was a radical & you could say 'romantic' enterprise started by Sydney artist Martin Sharp. He said "It really came out of an idea of Van Gogh's, because he called his studio the 'Yellow House' and he wanted to start a community of artists in the south [of France], in the sunshine, to get away from the madness of Paris". Between 1970 and 1973, Sydney's Yellow House was a piece of living art and a Mecca to Pop-art.
The canvas was the house itself and almost every wall, floor and ceiling became part of the gallery. Many well-known artists helped to create this multi-media performance art space that may have been Australia’s first 24 hour-a-day ‘happening’.

I made a sculpture there.
In those days in the early 1970s many writers, publishers, film makers, students, actors, photographers and visual artists were active in a campaign to repeal Australia's oppressive censorship laws.

In 1971 I was involved in making a publication called $X$ -

inspired graphic joy depicting explicit sexualities of all kinds. $X$ was published by a team of radical printers and pranksters. It was a defiant gesture to state censorship and the laws used to determine obscene publications. Made in-house at Tomato Press in Glebe using various processes like collage, screen print, and potato cut it was designed to resemble an annotated film script with stills. We called ourselves Synaesthetic Press.

The censorship laws were eventually changed and that year, after intense lobbying and protesting by filmmakers, the government introduced legislation and new classifications came into effect - R-rated films opened in cinemas around Australia.

I had already become Pamela 'Cocabola' Brown. 'Cocabola' was a pseudonym invented as a kind of ironic take on Andy Warhol's Factory superstars.

It originated at a small, heady lounge room gathering with a group of friends in our house in Surry Hills in 1972 and it stuck for several years.

In time spent in Melbourne I had learned silkscreen printing at a women's workshop. Back in Sydney I worked for a small commercial business, Australian Screenprinting, where I furthered my skills and then left after a couple of months to start a venture on Glebe Point Road - Cocabola's Silk Screen Printing.
I attempted to earn a living from making posters, cards, calico bags and so on. I had a screenprint-on-demand agreement with the new Australian *Rolling Stone* magazine to print their T-shirts and I wrote record reviews for them as well as for the progressive, investigative, counter-cultural independent newspaper, *The Digger*.

In the evenings in our group houses we didn't watch tv. We often sat around a table drinking tea, smoking some hashish, and occasionally enjoying some other substances. We'd read Arthur Rimbaud. We pursued our own derangements of the senses. We made collages and drawings.

In 1973 I was staying for a time in Sherbrooke in the Dandenong Mountains (in Victoria) and I decided to make a book that included the work of some of my friends.
This book was a reinterpreted trace of *Coles Funny Picture Book* first published in 1879 by Edward Cole, an English entrepreneur who had migrated to Melbourne in 1852 during the gold rush and eventually became a bookseller. His compendium, in various editions, was a popular omnibus of weird and wonderful illustrations, puzzles, verses and slogans on Cole's theme of the inevitability of a federated world with one religion. It was kept in print until 1966. His large Bourke Street bookshop - Cole's Book Arcade - glittered with mirrors and brass, and had two little mechanical men at the entrance turning over a series of mechanised, cymbal-clashing advertising boards. The staff were dressed in brilliant scarlet jackets. There was a giant rainbow over the façade.

I did the layout for *Cocabola's Funny Picture Book* on the kitchen table and then brought the pages, in all their multi-coloured splendour, up to Sydney to print at Tomato Press, which was also where I'd had my silkscreen shop. The book was large format, printed on coloured paper with a rainbow in the middle pages. Alongside the poems I included lots of artwork.

Not long after that I travelled to Adelaide thinking I might move there but after a couple of months, enabled by a crafts grant from the new Australia Council for the Arts, I moved back to Victoria to a town in the Dandenong Ranges called Monbulk and set up a silk screen printing workshop in one of the sheds that came with the house.

I wrote new poems in Monbulk and they were compiled as the small book, *Automatic Sad*. 
They were more pared back than my first two publications, and I think this small book marked a change where I began to write more consciously. The poems seem considered and less self-expressive and possibly even unintentionally aiming for an actual reader-other-than-friends. They seem more 'in the world' or in 'the poetry world' than the earlier writing. Some kind of transition was occurring. And it was the beginning of the use of cinematic accretion that would become a lasting aspect of my poetry writing.

My next move was back to Sydney where I gave almost all of the copies of *Automatic Sad* to the box office people at a Women's Dance in lieu of paying the admission fee. They gave the books away to the dance patrons.

So because of the giveaway it figures that this book is out-of-print (but it can also be found online: [http://www.scribd.com/doc/84767491/Automatic-Sad](http://www.scribd.com/doc/84767491/Automatic-Sad))

During this period I lived in Adelaide, South Australia, in Poet's Lane, Sherbrooke and Monbulk in the Dandenong Ranges and in Glebe and Leichhardt in Sydney.
In 1974, poet Nigel Roberts (who was, incidentally, originally from New Zealand) invited me to co-ordinate, together with him, artist Tim Burns and publisher Dave Morrissey *A Package Deal Assembly Book*. It was based on the assemblage books produced in the US by Richard Kostelanetz. As the title ironically suggests this project demonstrated (a bit like digital publishing can today) that published material can be altogether produced, distributed and controlled by the creators, independent of managerial or official structures. The catchphrase was ‘Every contributor will be a distributor.’

Sixty poets and artists each produced a page of a work and a contributor quickly screen-printed some two colour covers on the day of collation at the Tin Sheds, which was an Art Workshop at Sydney University.

The late poet John Forbes was still printing his contribution in the bottom shed as we were assembling the rest of the book in the middle shed. (The dress and the dolly images are Tim Burns' pages.)
There was often a kind of immediacy to pursuits in art in those days. No two copies were alike, each had original artwork as well as duplicated texts and graphics.

1975 was a big year - it was International Women's Year and it was also the year that Australian troops were withdrawn from the war in Vietnam.

And I became a songwriting/singing rhythm & bass guitarist in a newly formed women's band called Clitoris Band. We performed our politically didactic, witty and heartfelt feminist songs in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in various venues, over around 18 months.

In this period I lived in Annandale & Glebe in Sydney and at St Albans in the Macdonald Valley 90 kilometres northwest of Sydney.

In late summer in 1976 at a women's conference at Minto in south-western Sydney, myself and three other women decided to form a performance group and put on some theatre in order to raise money for Elsie Women's Refuge in Glebe.
Elsie staff had been the subject of aggressive attacks on the way to and from work and they wanted to buy walkie talkies in order to stay in touch with each other when outside the refuge. Obviously, this was decades before the introduction of mobile or cell phones.

From late 1976 and throughout 1977 our anarchy-feminist theatre group, The Lean Sisters, performed several shows with great verve. Coming from collective organisation as a political strategy, it was a theatre group whose motifs were the comedy of societal monoliths. There were no sacred cows for the Leans - images of women were positively re-interpretated, and feminist cliches were shaken up and tossed out along with other ideological power structures.
(the state, the church, big business, family hierarchies and so on). Throughout 1977 the Lean Sisters performed madcap political theatre to packed venues like The Tin Sheds and Bondi Pavilion.

The group’s members included poets, lawyers (one who has gone on to become one of Australia’s High Court Judges), political activists, journalists, teachers, musicians, painters and two actors. We developed the scripts, sets, the entire productions collectively which, looking back now, was an extraordinary feat.

All money raised from ticket sales went to womens' groups like the initial fundraising for Elsie Womens' Refuge. One show, *The Poetry Water Gossip Show*, involved assembling an above ground swimming pool and a diving board in the middle shed. Every performance in that show took place in the pool.
In the same year, 1977, the poetic-prose writer Anna Couani knocked on the door of my share-house in Westmoreland Street, Glebe and introduced herself.

She and Ken Bolton were editing a magazine, *Magic Sam*, and she asked if I could contribute some poems. So that was my first encounter with Anna & Ken and an aesthetic I was to engage with for some time to come.

The New South Wales Poets Union was also formed that year. The initial meeting was exclusively male. Anna Couani phoned me to tell me about it and asked if I would come to the second meeting. She was getting women poets to turn up to stack the meeting and introduce some policies for equality. I became a member.

After The Lean Sisters theatre group disbanded in early 1978 (in reaction against becoming normative by suggestions that we should apply for state funding) the members returned to their individual milieu. Then one ex-Lean Sister poet hankered for something like the salons of Parisian women writers in the 1920s. For a short time a few like-minded women writers met in a Lebanese coffee shop in Rozelle to share literary ideas and gossip. Then, in 1978, three members of this group, poets Lee Cataldi, Joanne Burns and Anna Couani, formed the Sydney Women Writers Workshop.
With the participation of a considerable number of contemporary women writers it became known as the ‘No Regrets’ group and continued to meet to discuss women and writing for several years.
The No Regrets group held public readings to raise money to produce a hands-on anthology - a compendium of writing by fifteen of the women involved in the group.

My next book, Cafe Sport, was a collection of poems written between 1974 and 1978. It was published in 1979 by Anna Couani's Sea Cruise Books. Many of these poems were in a kind of 'confessional' mode, which was 'of the times' - a woman figuring out relationship in a patriarchal world - but they had a tough, punk kind of tone that probably saved them, at the time, from mawkishness.

Re-reading early poems as I scanned book covers for this talk I was reminded how vulnerable it is to publish. It is, in a way, like developing your arts in public. Many early poems seem innocent to me now - spontaneous, youthful, with plenty to learn. Both the times and I have altered enormously.
I met Tom Thompson, independent publisher of Red Press, at one of the Poets Union meetings. Not long after, Tom published a book of my prose poetry alongside Joanne Burns’ prose, *Correspondences*. My then partner, artist Micky Allan, and I silk screened the titles in various colours onto her cover photo at the Tin Sheds.

These last things happened when I lived in Glebe and Rozelle in Sydney.

Of course, locality determines involvement in community or coterie which comes kind of organically from connections made in working together - in my case - organising readings, printing, publishing, reading each other's work and so on. I started to become closer to like-minds Ken Bolton and Sal Brereton and other artists and poets who gathered at their house at Coalcliff on the Illawarra Coast between Sydney and Wollongong.
While our poems continued to contain some subjectivity we were becoming more cognizant of the use of subjectivity in relation to earlier poetries. We shared a kind of “anti-romantic” position - meaning we were against the high diction – against poetry strongly dependant on metaphor and myth and would probably say then that our bias was towards work “that is modern”, in the sense of its being formally self-conscious, aware of its method of working, even exhibiting or drawing attention to its methods. So, this differentiated us from poets associated with the magazines *New Poetry* and *Poetry Australia* (that we viewed as venues that valued a conventional, unchallenging formality - not 'new' in our terms). We were reading US poets and had less European focus than the Melbourne poets around their magazines *The Ear* or *etymospheres*, to which we were not opposed, but our publications didn’t resemble theirs.

I'll quote something Robert Archambeau said about the 'contemporary': "a true contemporary is out of joint with the times, and this alienation gives a perspective from which she sees the time in ways the time does not see itself. She sees, in particular, the persistence of the past in the present, and wishes to change or modify the present in ways that also reconfigure how we feel about the past. It’s a tall order, and contemporaries are rare."

I think we who shared The Coalcliff Days might have hoped that we were 'contemporary'.

22
An exhibition documenting our work during that period was on show at Wollongong City Art Gallery for three weeks in April/May in 2011. There is a blog called The Coalcliff Days - it has links to e-books from the exhibition.

Sydney was central to a poetic boom in the 1970s. It was a movement of experimentation and poet-and-artist-led production of magazines, pamphlets and books. It was various and dynamic. The social connection made through tasks, in my experience, remains throughout a lifetime, although not in an unaltered manner. The internet has blurred this concept - publication is no longer limited to or contingent on where you live and you'll find groups becoming online mini-movements.

In 1980 Micky Allan and I moved from inner city Rozelle to Mountain Lagoon near Bilpin, a mountain apple growing area 90 kilometres west of Sydney.
I was teaching Super 8 film making at Sydney University's Tin Sheds Art Workshop and negotiating with the Architecture Department for the Tin Sheds' first accredited courses (which came into being).

Using my imprint, Never-Never-Books,

I published *Country & Eastern*, a small, kind of Barthesian-yearning book. The poems express some loneliness but they take a more upbeat turn towards the end. Micky and I silkscreened the covers at the Tin Sheds.

Then in 1981 we moved to Adelaide where I quickly found a job as assistant to the director of the Experimental Art Foundation, the 'EAF'.

I was involved with a diversity of projects including a very valuable residency with a group of indigenous people from Broome in Western Australia. I worked on exhibitions, events,
performance art, artist talks, held film screenings and participated in readings and an international travelling anti-nuclear movement exhibition. I also co-ordinated a hands-on book-making project for the annual Youth Arts Festival.

In 1982, I organised a six-week residency at the EAF for Ken Bolton.

His project was to produce four square format chapbooks of current poetry. He included a selection of my own poems - *Small Blue View*.

It was a book of six minimal poems, one a kind of impressionistic poem that covered the experience of living in Adelaide. Ken drew the cover images which he and I silkscreened at artist Ann Newmarch's place. I remember that huge tree (that you see on the back cover) in my neighbour's yard in Parkside. It was a VERY BIG tree - and unforgettable because of that.

Ken and I were members of the hard-working, innovative committee that devised the first Artist's Week for the Adelaide Festival of the Arts.

After the festival I packed up and returned to Sydney.

I remember reading, in Sydney that year, in Polysexuality, an issue of *Semiotext(e)* journal, about a strange disease effecting homosexuals. It turned out, of course, to be the Human Immunodeficiency Virus leading to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
I became active in writing and performing in gay and lesbian events at the Gay Community Centre in Surry Hills and other venues and in readings for what was then the very political annual Gay Mardi Gras. Homosexuality wasn't legalised in New South Wales until 1984.

In 1982 I was invited to participate in the first Women & Arts Festival, in Sydney. I gave a talk on self-publishing, did some readings and a two day workshop for women writers and artists. I demonstrated the entire process, from the work on the page through the photographic and offset printing process to stapling and binding, of book making resulting, in two days, in a collection called *A Book of our Own*.

**A Book of Our Own  1982**

An offshoot of the Women & Arts Festival was the formation of a co-operative publishing venture for women's writing called Redress Press. It involved dozens of women writers. In 1984 one of the first four books Redress published was my own *Selected Poems 1971- 82*. The cover drawing, which slightly alarmed a few people, is by Micky Allan.
I think my engagement with anti-romantic, anti-poetic poetry lead into a general scepticism or distrust of grand narratives in the 1980s, or vice-versa. The big international narratives of economic rationalist nationalists like Reagan & Thatcher influenced the entire world, including Australia. We were sceptical of grandiose explanations and big solutions to conflict like Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative - a space based anti-missile system.

One response for poets was montage - to détourne texts and undermine the notion of a single authoritative speaker or writer.

I began collaborating with musician/composer Elizabeth Drake & sound poet Amanda Stewart to devise a performance for the FUTUR*FALL : Excursions into Post-Modernity conference when Jean Baudrillard visited Sydney. Our title was taken from a line by Gertrude Stein – “And that is very interesting.” After the conference we continued performing it in a season at Bondi Pavilion, Sydney.

This led to the formation of another group of collaborators, myself and three other women writers: the late Jan McKemmish, Carol Christie and Amanda Stewart.

Generic Ghosts
Calling ourselves Generic Ghosts we compiled montaged pieces, first as an intervention into the linearity of academic papers given at a Cultural Conference at the University of Technology Sydney in 1986. These montages were the work of many writers and were constructed especially for public reading. They were a response to the writer as authoritative voice, to the language of threat and terrorism and to the notions that feminist or women’s writing be concerned only with the ‘I’ and the ‘Other’. The work was compiled from clippings from various texts brought to the table by each participant and group-assembled. We performed them at conferences and later at Writers In The Park, at the Harold Park Hotel and at The Performance Space. One of these, 'The Return of The Dead I or Modes of Goo' was published by Fab Press in the anthology *Writers in The Park*.

In this period I lived in Newtown and Petersham and I also travelled overseas for the first time for a couple of months in Italy and France.

1988 was the year celebrating the bicentenary of James Cook's arrival in Australia and of the subsequent 200 years of white settlement.

Instead of frolicking on Sydney Harbour in amongst the first fleet reenactment on January 26th - 'Australia Day' - I joined with more than 40,000 people, including aborigines from across the country, in the largest protest march in Sydney since the early 1970s Vietnam Moratorium demonstrations. We marched through Sydney chanting for land rights and ended at Hyde Park where several prominent aboriginal leaders and activists spoke about the continuing struggle for rights and recognition.
Since 1938, Australia Day had been known as the 'Day of Mourning'. In 1988 it became 'Invasion Day'. That year, as a protest against continuing Aboriginal disadvantage during the Bicentennial Celebration of White Australia, the indigenous poet Kath Walker returned her 1970 award - Member of the British Empire - and subsequently adopted her Noonuccal tribal name Oodgeroo (meaning “paperbark”). And her friend, the great progressive, poet Judith Wright, boycotted the 1988 bicentennial celebrations. For my part, apart from demonstrating, I refused participation in bicentennial readings and anthologies like *The Tin Wash Dish: Poems for Today’s Australians* (the title is from a poem by Les Murray) which was a collection of poems from people who entered an Australian Broadcasting literary competition that was one of their contributions to the bicentennial. It veered towards a conservative, mostly white perspective.

In the same year Jan McKemmish and I continued our montage process and wrote *As Much Trouble As Talking*, a performance text which played for a three week season at Belvoir St Theatre in Sydney. It was later edited for national radio broadcast on ABC’s The Listening Room. Then Jan and I landed a three month playwriting residency at The Performance Space in 1989, where we experimented with more texts for performance.

The cover drawing is by the late Melbourne artist, Sue Ford.
By 1990, my *Selected Poems 1971-82* was out-of-print so Pat Woolley, a co-founder of Redress Press and director of Wild & Woolley publishing, decided to publish an updated selection - *New & Selected Poems*. The cover painting is by Jan Mackay, a Sydney artist who also designed the poster for 'As Much Trouble As Talking'.

During this period I lived in Petersham, Camperdown and Leichhardt in Sydney.

In 1994, the University of Queensland Press published my collection *This World. This Place*.

These poems included my responses to some foreign trips to Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Besozzo and other places in Italy, and, in the final poems, especially one called 'Flickering Gaudi', my poetry writing took a distinctly different direction from anything I'd written up to then. A new kind of abstraction began for me.

I took the cover photo in the lane behind our place in Camperdown and Kent Whitmore designed it.
On the advice of the UQP editor, Sue Abbey, I'd cut some poems from the manuscript. I published them as a supplement called *Little Droppings* and dedicated it to Sue Abbey.

Three years later, in 1997, Little Esther Books published *50-50*, a collection of around thirty restless poems.

The title was intended to suggest that the poet and the reader would go 50-50 on the poems that in turn might have a 50-50 chance of working out just like the androgynous River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves sharing a delirious cigarette on the cover. The poems had the usual roots in politics honed in the ironies or paradoxes of Australia's geopolitical situation.

In 1998 poet John Kinsella, who was teaching Australian poetry at Cambridge University, published, alongside others, a chapbook of my poems.
where in one, I described 'writing a poem' as 'a shambling contingency'. John distributed them in the UK to his students and other poets. His imprint, Folio/Salt was later to become the well-known international publisher, Salt.

Also in 1998, after he published my review of The Oxford University Press *Anthology of New Zealand Poetry in English*, the editor Ian Syson asked me to join the progressive literary journal *Overland* as the poetry editor. I continued in that role for five years, until 2002. It was a task I relished.

The millennium turned without mishap.
Around that time, a small poetry press with lofty ideals was started up by some Sydney University English Department students. They began publishing fine art chapbooks as Vagabond Press. A group of four poems of mine was published - *Drifting Topoi*.

I also guest-edited a series of four chapbooks for Vagabond that year introducing the work of young poets like former Yugoslavia-born Lidija Cvetkovic, whose poetry I'd encountered at *Overland* magazine, and the young indigenous poet from Brisbane Samuel Wagan Watson.

In the year 2000 my partner Jane Zemiro and I fled the Sydney Olympics for the Indian Ocean islands Mauritius and La Réunion. The following year we travelled to Berlin via Hawai'i and Montreal in Quebec, and later, after Berlin, we stayed for a time in France. On the way up to Canada I wanted to stop in Hawai'i to meet an internet cohort, the poet, academic and publisher Susan Schultz. I wrote some poems on these trips.

I first came across the term '747 poem' in a chapbook by Rob Wilson that Susan's Tinfish Press published, called *Pacific Postmodern*. The term denotes an impressionistic fly-in fly-out view of the world. Later Randolph Healy, an Irish poet and publisher of Wild Honey
Press, made the chapbook eleven 747 poems.

In 2002 Susan Schultz and I were invited to set up a department in the online site International Corporation for Lost Structures.

We became Job Share Archivists in our newly created Department of Dislocated Memory. As the USA and Australia were embarking on the second invasion of Iraq and, later, a war in Afghanistan, we began to compile a collaborative poem and prose poem examining war, power and the effects on the everydayness of most people’s lives. It was called Amnesiac Recoveries.

In the same year Little Esther Books published my next collection of poems, Text thing -
it became my favourite of all my books thus far. It seemed to be a consolidation of recent work. Among other things, the poems canvassed post-coloniality, and reflected on the position of a kind of 'thinking tourist'. The cover photo of the beachside graffiti on besser brick – “wile you are reeding th...” – is by Kurt Brereton.

My next collection that same year was compiled as a new and selected poems with a northern hemisphere audience in mind.

I think it's still a good introduction to all the other books I've been showing you, up to that date. *Dear Deliria* was published in the UK by Salt.

The cover image is a detail from a painting by Jon Cattapan, a Melbourne based artist, that was the beginning of our continuing collaboration.

In 2004 John Tranter asked me to join him in editing the influential international online journal *Jacket*. Thus began the most email correspondence I've ever conducted in my life with some of the most fascinating poetry people.
In 2005 Vagabond Press, the independent student press I mentioned earlier, published the chapbook *Let's Get Lost*.

![Let's Get Lost](image)

I'd spent 6 months living in a poet’s flat in Rome in 2003. Ken Bolton had stayed there in an earlier year. *Let's Get Lost* comprises poems exchanged between myself, Ken and our mutual friend Laurie Duggan during that period. The result is an agenda-less mulling over places and cultures. It's often in shorthand, casual, and is also sometimes intensely specific - and, as Fran Daddo said, it's “funny, memorable, accurate.”

So in those years I lived in Bellevue Hill and Rose Bay in Sydney with visits to a Blackheath weekender and a half-year stint in Rome, Italy.

![Peel me a zibibbo](image)

Using my imprint Never-Never Books I published limited editions of two chapbooks in 2006. *Peel me a zibibbo* - its subtitle was 'five poems for friends' - and a reissue of the chapbook John Kinsella had published in Cambridge, *My lightweight intentions*, with a new cover, a photo that I took in the Graffiti Tunnel at Sydney University.
Also in 2006 a collaboration between the Seattle-based Egyptian poet Maged Zaher and myself came about due to the absence of a poem. Maged had sent me a submission to *Jacket* magazine. But he forgot to attach the poem. As he said to 'atone' for this, Maged proposed a collaboration between us; this collaboration was to last for a year and a half and became the poems that Susan Schultz's Tinfish Press published in the chapbook *farout_library_software*.

The collaboration process was smooth, the poems seem seamless - I still can't tell whose writing is whose. Among the poems' topics are change, constant change of jobs, friends, cities, and of course the software with which we mark time's passing. The cover is by Chae Ho Lee.

Nicholas Pounder, Sydney poet, bookseller and publisher at Polar Bear Press, surprised me by publishing a fine art broadsheet of the poem ‘Train Train’ in 2007, in a limited edition of 26 signed copies lettered A-Z. The poem was to be the final one in my next book *True Thoughts.*
These poems were written between 2002 and 2007 in that period of global instability and military irruption. Even so, they were anchored in the everyday, moderated by a self-conscious slant and moved through many realms, both actual and metaphysical. And that useful quality, irony, affected a sense of the ludicrous in the face of mortality. These poems attempted to fathom the question 'how to live?' alongside the larger one 'how to live now?'

When I was a silkscreen printer I used to enjoy thinking up slogans to print on T-shirts – ‘I am a humorless feminist’ was one of my big successes. ‘I’m so shallow I’m stranded’ and ‘I’m so deep I’m drowning’ were two that had moderate success and ‘No, I’m not Dora Carrington’ was almost a total failure, except for its use by a Bloomsbury enthusiast who wore it until it faded and thinned and eventually became a cleaning rag. I stopped making screen-printed T-shirts before I had the chance to use my favourite, a T-shirt that could be worn anywhere on the planet, bearing two words - ‘Authentic Local.’ Several decades later, in 2010, a collection of my poems was published by Papertiger with the title Authentic Local.

Two lines open the book - 'Authentic locals/anywhere and everywhere'. The word 'authentic' to me means that a person's not being manipulated nor alienated from their context or
surrounding values, so authenticity can vary, and be peripatetic - in the sense of 'authenticity' lending value to a place, a person, an object and so on. My use of it was intended as ironic.

I'd like to reflect a little here on 'irony', using a borrowed question: Is irony always supercilious?

Irony can be seen as being politically paralysing because it points out problems rather than seeking solutions to them. US poet Bob Perelman said to fellow poet Rae Armantrout: "Irony seems to helplessly laugh at the unredeemed social world and pick it apart to show its inadequacies without showing any way to transcend them." It is that word 'helplessly' that secures its use for me, and I'm not sure I'd seek 'transcendence' over problems. Rae Armantrout responded – "It's probably elitist as well as unrealistic to think art can point out solutions. Art is the play of resonance and dissonance. To the extent that it can foreground social dissonances, it can serve a political end by increasing people's discomfort" (Archambeau).

Also in 2010 Jesse Glass from Ahadada Books in Japan offered me the opportunity to publish some poems as an e-book.

So we made the meh of z z z z. I think some of Lisa Samuels' students in Auckland read it earlier this year. The obvious advantage of an e-book is that it's always available on the web, and this one is also free.

In this period I lived in Rose Bay and Chinatown in Sydney, Ellwood and St Kilda in Melbourne and Leura and Blackheath in the Blue Mountains.

In 2010 John Tranter retired from Jacket and he arranged for the magazine to move to Philadelphia to the University of Pennsylvania to become Jacket2 in the following year. I was no longer involved on a daily basis, and my inbox gradually reduced its bulging weight.
When he heard that *Jacket* was going to change, Bob Arnold of Longhouse Publishing in Vermont in the US, emailed to say that he'd like to publish a broadsheet of some of my poems in thanks for publishing his work in *Jacket*.

Needless to say, I was very pleased by this gesture. Bob made the small folded broadsheet of seven poems, *Sentimental*, in 2010.
In 2011 another chapbook offer came my way. Rob Riel's Picaro Press wanted to publish a selection of my poems in his Wagtail series. It's called *In my phone*. Rob was generous in offering to publish my poems as we don't really share an aesthetic or similar outlook.

I stayed on at *Jacket2* as an associate and last year, because I knew that the new editors were going to publish mostly theoretical work and that their bias would be inevitably more North American than mine and John's had been, I thought it was important to include some actual poetry from 'the arse end of the world,' as Paul Keating once memorably called Australia, so I edited a feature of fifty-one Australian poets and several artists: ([http://jacket2.org/feature/fifty-one-contemporary-poets-australia](http://jacket2.org/feature/fifty-one-contemporary-poets-australia)).
In this period I lived in Haymarket Chinatown and Annandale and finally, Alexandria, where I still live and intend to stay put.

2012 saw the publication of a couple of chapbooks:

*Anyworld* is a pocket-sized selection of poems from various earlier publications published by Kit Kelen's Macau-based press Flying Islands.

*More than a feuilleton* is a small book of six poems published by Ken Bolton's Little Esther Books.

To explain the title - a contemporary example of a *feuilleton* might be the ‘Talk of the Town’ section of *The New Yorker* magazine. In English newspapers, the term *feuilleton* referred to an installment of a serial story. In contemporary French, *a feuilleton* is a soap opera broadcast on tv or a radio serial. I intend my use of *feuilleton* to have the quality of the original French meaning – ‘saying true things in half a page or less.’ And as the poem is discursive it's 'more than a feuilleton'. The booklet includes a poem called 'Worldless,' which I'd also like to extrapolate on a little and I hope it doesn't seem too high-falutin.
Just over a decade ago, in 2002, as she took stock of the end of the 20th century, the feminist literary theorist Julia Kristeva worried about the 'helplessness' that I mentioned earlier. She observed: "We live in a time in which civilization is on the brink of collapse ... There are many signs of this collapse of the symbolic function; mass suicide [I think she meant Jonestown or Waco], drug addiction, unemployment, social marginalization, as well as the empire of images and the destruction of the family. A function that human beings fostered during thousands of years, the internalisation of prohibitions in the form of a superego or an ideal ego, is being destroyed, and psychic space is adrift, lost in a state of delirium.”

Others have said that we live in a social space which is increasingly experienced as ‘worldless’: in such a space, the only form protest can take is meaningless violence (like, say, the London Riots of 2011). Perhaps this is one of the main dangers of capitalism: although by virtue of being global it encompasses the whole world, it sustains a ‘worldless’ ideological constellation in which people are deprived of their ways of locating meaning.

Referring back to that notion of helplessness, I wanted very little to happen in a poem I called 'Worldless' - I wanted, if I could write it, to somehow epitomise an everyday sense of ‘worldlessness.’ Once again, I employed a kind of cinematic accretion and I hoped it was a mechanism that didn't foreground a rationale or agenda. The poem ends without strong fanfare or conclusion. These feuilleton poems are included in my recent book Home by Dark.

In March this year a collection of kinetic, fragmentary-yet-often-discursive, mostly agenda-free poems (including 'Worldless') that I wrote from around 2008 until late 2012 was published by Tony Frazer's Shearsman Books in the UK. The cover detail is, once again, by Jon Cattapan. It's currently travelling through the poetry realm and other zones ... looking for its shelves.

I'm not sure that I've made any points about movement as a modus operandi or about being a varietal local or poetry's social and political function, but I do know that here, looking east
into Oceania, I'm definitely a foreign bystander with many doubts about the relevance of what I've just presented as my life in books and booklets.

Works Cited:

Archambeau, Robert. 'Who is a Contemporary Poet,' B O D Y, April, 2013 http://bodyliterature.com/2013/04/24/robert-archambeau/

Bernstein, Charles. 'How Empty is my Bread Pudding', p. 81, Recalculating, University of Chicago Press, 2012

Bolton, Ken: email exchange with Pam Brown 2012


Kristeva, Julia. Interview by Rainer Ganahl in Revolt, She Said (New York: Semiotexte Foreign Agents Series, 2002) p.199

Schultz, Susan: facebook, 18.06.13
