

# a wattle seedpod

*haiku* by **lorin ford**





a wattle seedpod

lorin ford

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*ressed*  
teneriffe  
2008

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## FOREWORD

Lorin Ford explains her engagement with haiku in these revealing words:

*My response to haiku, when subjected to it, was privately much closer to 'so what?' than 'aha!'. Then one day, I heard this haiku read aloud:*

*picking up a jellyfish...  
my lifeline  
clear and deep*

– Dhugal Lindsay

[*sukuu te-no kurage-ya seimeisen fukaku*, written and translated by Dhugal]

*The effect was immediate – a physical quiver of recognition. The memory of my original experience was vivid and unmediated by overt authorial presence...*

*This was a happy accident. It made me realise that haiku are meant to be 'seen through' by us as readers, to our own experiences in the world.*

I like to think the older Bashō would have been pleased by Lorin's story. Perhaps he'd wish all of us such insight and the modesty to write accordingly.

Writing skilfully within the popular mould for English-language haiku, Lorin has won endorsement from editors and empathy with readers without losing either her freshness or her Australian voice. This poet does not live in *Haikuland*. She may well become a haijin who helps move English-language haiku closer to poetry.

John Bird

for  
*Laryalee Fraser*  
the patient mentor  
of my haiku beginnings

My special thanks and gratitude to Janice M. Bostok,  
for reading my haiku and for her help with the selection  
of haiku from which this book was developed.

first light –  
eye to dreaming eye  
with a kookaburra

river sunrise  
a girl's shadow  
swims from my ankles

heat shimmer  
a kingfisher's wings  
answer the river

the road home  
all the old milestones  
flashing by

country road  
a new wreath  
on the scarred tree

wattle in bloom –  
old friendships renewed  
at the funeral

headstone  
a leaf crosses out  
the I in his name

winter wind  
an empty spider web  
moored to the window

wool skeins  
the shades of winters past  
sorted anew

the crack of dawn arthritic fingers gather kindling

cold moon  
the panel beater's dog  
howls at a hubcap

dry winter  
a geranium wilts  
in the pub window

skylight  
a possum's paw print  
on the moon

cold night  
the breath of children  
being dragons

winter moon  
a smudged fingerprint  
on the ink stone

clear night –  
cows huddled  
behind their breath

Milky Way  
a stream of termites  
from the woodpile

crushed grass  
where the calf was born  
morning dew

the calf's fur  
licked into curls –  
woodstove smoke

clear water –  
a magpie's song drops  
into the pond

on a bare twig rain beads what light there is

the spring  
in a wattle spray  
... silvereyes

first lily light before sunrise

japonica sprig ...  
the woodblock print  
has faded

sakura ...  
the taste of chilled wine  
from a clay cup

butterflies  
the book falls open  
at his love poem

vestry steps  
a sparrow raising dust  
and confetti

Fathers' Day  
forget-me-nots  
on the priest's grave

the rusted hooks  
in Dad's tackle box –  
spring tide

snapper run –  
his red cigarette tip  
bobbing on the bay

the sound of water  
a fisherman fiddles  
with his fly

fish story  
a cormorant spreads its wings  
wider

rock pool  
a puffer fish  
in my face

wave wash –  
soldier crabs march on  
through the stars

rusted hinge  
the butterfly's wings  
close, open...

laundry day  
a magpie on the clothesline  
singing down rain

cloudburst  
a grey tabby  
pours from the shed roof

red-brick lane each cat on its own window ledge

sliver moon  
the sheath of a cat's claw  
on the doormat

Halloween  
i go to the party  
as myself

street café –  
sparrows wait  
on the tables

traffic snarl  
the blue heeler  
nudges my elbow

flooded road  
a soft drink bottle  
turns left

parked utes –  
kelpie ears point  
to the pub

solo bushwalk  
the wolf-whistle  
from a currawong

my lifeline  
pressed to an insect's –  
scribbly gum

horseflies!  
a wattlebird's welcome  
wing-snap

summertime  
i wash nicotine stains  
from the clock face

sunday speedboats  
a water beetle circles  
back to shore

heat wave  
a dog shakes pond water  
on the lovers

porch barbeque –  
spiders drop in  
from the rafters

*silent night...*  
the shrill counterpoint  
of cicadas

bon-bons  
a wattle seedpod opens  
with a pop

Christmas party –  
mynahs watch over a nest  
in the garage

the scent  
of frangipani...  
alone with the moon

breathless heat  
the horse's hoof-fall  
muffled by dust

heat haze  
the miles  
of boundary fence

prickly pear –  
two old graziers blame  
each other

red dust road  
a cattle truck reaches  
the vanishing point

desert sunset  
the dingo's shadow  
inches closer

rock face  
a red ochre handprint  
above graffiti

didgeridoo  
an emerging cicada  
shakes-a-leg

a dream time  
before theirs and mine –  
Wollemi Pine

drought –  
wind sweeps the stones  
in the temple pond

long drought –  
boulder lichen  
holds on

temple looting –  
another Buddha  
loses his head

cinders fall  
on the red hot pokers –  
abandoned shack

red moon  
the calligraphy  
of charred trees

electric storm  
a crack in the wall  
lights up

rain!  
i dance barefoot  
between snails

a raga  
from the junkyard –  
summer rain

reef dive  
a turtle climbs green water  
into the blue

bay shallows  
a starfish moves its fingers  
over mine

ebb tide  
the beached jellyfish  
quivers

the sound of shells  
drawn in by an ebb-wave...  
another breath

low tide –  
bits and pieces of her  
wedding china

a seagull  
claims the sandcastle  
... incoming tide

summer affair  
the purple sea urchin  
i brought home

anzac parade –  
swallows swoop over  
the eternal flame

even the names  
in the shade have faded –  
memorial park

clouded sun –  
his old tweed coat  
in shades of grey

beer garden table  
the blurred edges  
of many circles

rain shadow  
the kitchen tap's  
drip ... drip ...

cicada husk ...  
also clinging  
to a straw

lunar eclipse  
a moth taps circles  
on the ceiling

look, the first  
sasanqua camellia!  
the cat's pink yawn

Mothers' Day  
the weight of fog  
on a late rose

candlelight  
through rice paper  
... grandmother's face

pomegranate seeds  
the tang of her secret  
on my tongue

polite 'good mornings'  
from a building crew  
... autumn

city schoolyard  
a teacher shows children  
how to skip rope

red leaves –  
the tree-climbing vine  
drops its disguise

wind chill  
a spider wrapped up  
in a rolled leaf

calm afternoon...  
how easily the birch tree  
lets go its leaves

sundown –  
rainbow lorikeets  
fade to black

windblown leaves  
the 'living statue'  
packs her bag

autumn walk  
a tissue paper box  
follows me

willi-willi  
the golden retriever's  
giddy orbit

unswept leaves  
my foot brushes  
a sparrow

leafless trees –  
ice-green lichen  
blooms on the roof tiles

rehab courtyard  
a dry leaf shuffles  
the circuit

twilight mist –  
that old wanderer's beard  
through the screen door

express train  
a hag's apparition  
at the window

terminal  
the click of high heels  
falters in mist

night river –  
trains ripple over  
the floating city

half moon...  
she turns her pale face  
to the darkness

winter beach –  
i throw a stick  
for no dog

finally getting  
the why of loneliness –  
bright sun on ice

land's end  
a seal returns  
the dog's bark

**Biography: Lorin Ford** writes haiku and longer poems. She lives in Brunswick, Victoria. Much of Lorin's early childhood was spent on the foreshore and beach of a Melbourne bay-side suburb. From age nine she lived with her father, who ran the pub in an East Gippsland timber town. She left school early, preferring a 'glamorous' career in hairdressing to her year 9 correspondence lessons. Later, after a variety of jobs – from art school model to veterinary nurse – she received an Honours degree in English Literature and subsequently taught English and ESL in high schools. Lorin wrote a few poems in her teenage years and returned to writing again this century. Over 300 of her haiku have been published in Australia and overseas.

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*'a procession of ripples'* (Canada), *Clouds Peak* (USA), *Chrysanthemum* (Germany), *Famous Reporter*, *FreeXpresSion*, *Frogpond* (USA), *haigaonline* (USA), *'haiku dreaming australia'*, *Haiku Harvest* (USA), *Kokako* (NZ), *Mainichi Daily News* (Japan), *Modern Haiku* (USA), *Moonset* (USA), *Moving Galleries*, *Page Seventeen*, *paper wasp*, *paper wasp Jack Stamm anthologies 'clear water', 'rusted hinge' and 'a maple leaf'*, *POAM*, *The Poets Republic*, *'Second Australian Haiku Anthology'*, *Shamrock Haiku Journal* (Ireland), *Simply Haiku* (USA), *Stylus*, *The Heron's Nest* (USA), *The Mozzie*, *The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival Haiku Invitational* (Canada), *tinywords* (USA), *Yellow Moon*, *World Haiku Review* (England), *World Haiku Review* (Europe) and *WHR Treetops* (USA).

**Awards include:** 1st prize in the 6th and 7th Annual *paper wasp Jack Stamm Awards*, 1st prize *Shiki Salon Annual Haiku Poets' Choice Award*, 2005 and 1st prize *Haiku Hut haiku* competition, 2006



# a wattle seedpod

Lorin Ford's imagery takes me right smack dab to her native Australia. Brilliantly inviting, *a wattle seedpod* offers close-up looks at small yet crucial events. She moves easily between human and natural worlds, most often seamlessly blending the two in an ideal haiku balance. Naturalist and poet, she takes me to a place where day-to-day existence can be as harsh and dangerous as it is rewarding. The beauty and utter realness of her work quite take my breath away.

Ferris Gilli, associate editor, *The Heron's Nest*

A lively and engaging collection. Written sometimes with humour – always with sensitivity – these haiku reflect the fine detail of Australian rural and urban images.

*a wattle seed-pod* makes a positive contribution to contemporary Australian poetry.

Beverley George, President, Australian Haiku Society

Lorin Ford is a poet with a gift for precision. She brings her skill with language, keen insight and poetic sensibility to these cameos of vividly-recalled moments. The effect can be likened to a seedpod bursting open, potent with life and energy.

*a wattle seedpod*, her first haiku collection, is one to be savoured for its richness, variety and depth.

Lyn Reeves, haiku editor, *Famous Reporter*.