



Melanie Ostell Literary

February 2021 Newsletter/Forthcoming Adult Titles list

Melanie Ostell Literary
m: +61 403 920 311
e: mo@melanieostell.com.au
e: info@melanieostell.com.au
w: melanieostell.com.au
t: @mjostell

PO Box 1152
Windsor VIC 3181
AUSTRALIA

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Melanie Ostell has worked in trade publishing as an editor, publisher, educator and now literary agent. In 2002 she spent three months in-house in London and New York on a Churchill Fellowship. A senior editor at Text Publishing for over ten years, Melanie has since freelanced with all major Australian publishers and held publisher positions in Perth and Sydney. She has led writing workshops across the country, taught at several universities and is a registered mentor with the Australian Society of Authors. Melanie's current focus is on building her client list.

FICTION

A LONELY GIRL IS A DANGEROUS THING

Jessie Tu

Over 30,000 copies sold in ANZ since its July 2020 release

Shortlisted:

**The Readings Prize for New Australian Fiction 2020
Best Debut Fiction, Indie Book Awards, 2021**

Twenty-two-year-old Jena Lin plays the violin. Once a child prodigy she now uses sex to fill the void left by fame. Her professional life is rehearsals, concerts, auditions and practice; her personal life is spent managing the demands of her strict family and creative friends, and hooking up. Then she meets Mark – much older and worldly-wise – who consumes her. Could this be love?



‘A powerful new voice.’ Christos Tsiolkas, author of *Damascus*

‘Bold, enthralling and sharp ... Tu has created a character who challenges society’s expectations and assumptions of Asian-Australian women.’ Australian *VOGUE*

‘What a title, and what a debut novel ... a remarkable and strong entry into the national literary scene.’ *Australian Book Review*

Jena sleeps with a variety of men who lay “claim” to her. She ultimately transcends them ... **Selfish, motivated, duplicitous, brilliant: Jena is unapologetically complex ... An absorbing, occasionally confronting and often captivating first novel.** *Sydney Morning Herald*

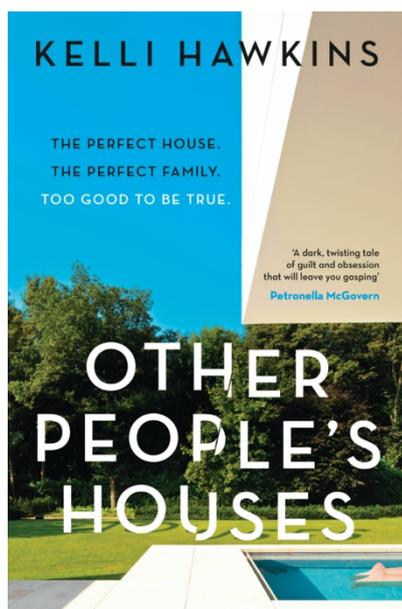
Jena discards men like autumn leaves. She uses them and they use her ... Tu sheds light on driving ambition, the role of parents and the fine line between excellence, cruelty and punishment ... **A raw and illuminating book. Highly recommended.** *The Canberra Times*

‘A novel of race, class, discrimination within creative communities, youth, and familial expectation ... my most dog-eared book of 2020 ... gorgeously expressed lines, as well as stingingly abject and visceral ones ... go out and read it as soon as you can.’ Ellen Cregan, *Kill Your Darlings*

PDF of final pages available • 80,000 words • Literary fiction • Rights: ANZ publication July 2020 by Allen & Unwin. Film option: Thumper Productions, Sydney.

Co-agents: China & Taiwan: Grayhawk; France: Gregory Messina, Linwood Messina; Italy: Erica Berla, Berla & Griffini; Germany: Christian Dittus, Paul & Peter Fritz; Netherlands: Monique Oosterhof, MO Literary Services; **North America: Melissa Danaczko, Stuart Krichevsky Literary Agency**; Spain: Anna Bofill, Agencia Balcels; Turkey: Amy Spangler, Anatolia. All other rights: Melanie Ostell Literary.

FICTION



OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES

Kelli Hawkins

*The photo of the smiling family.
The perfect house, with the boy who could have been mine.*

Kate Webb still grieves for her young son, ten years after his loss. She spends her weekends hungover, attending open houses on Sydney's wealthy north shore and imagining the lives of the people who live there.

Then Kate visits the Harding house – the perfect house with, it seems, the perfect family.

A photograph captures a kind-looking man, a beautiful woman she once knew from university days, and a boy – a boy that for one heartbreaking moment she believes is her own son. When her curiosity turns to obsession, she uncovers the cracks that lie beneath a glossy facade of perfection.

Or is it her imagination? As events spiral dangerously out of control, could the real threat be Kate herself?

Comparisons with recent thrillers such as Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train* and A. J. Finn's *The Woman by the Window* are warranted, though Kate has more grit than those women. And there's also a generous nod to Liane Moriarty with its unmistakable wry Aussie humour.

Kelli Hawkins is a journalist and designer who currently writes reports for a private investigator as well as novels for adults and children. She lives in Newcastle with her two teenagers. This is her debut adult novel.

Final pages available; 83,000 words • crime/thriller

ANZ rights acquired by HarperCollins (two-book deal), to publish in March 2021; French rights, Hauteville Rights: All other rights available. Please note vigorous interest in screen rights.

Co-agents: China & Taiwan: Grayhawk; France: Gregory Messina, Linwood Messina; Italy: Erica Berla, Berla & Griffini; Germany: Christian Dittus, Paul & Peter Fritz; Netherlands: Monique Oosterhof, MO Literary Services; **North America: Sally Wofford-Girand, Union Literary**; Spain: Anna Bofill, Agencia Balcells; Turkey: Amy Spangler, Anatolia.
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FICTION

THE CURLEW'S EYE

Karen Manton

Greta's partner Joel was raised on a large property on the outskirts of a small Northern Territory town. Joel came from a big family – seven brothers and a sister – and together with his immigrant parents, and his father's two brothers, his early years were spent in a boisterous house. Now, many years later, Joel returns with Greta and their three young boys during the build-up. Of all the adult children, he is the one tasked with readying the land for sale.

The family of five move in to the cottage down the hill from the main, burnt-out house to consider what needs to be done and how long it might take. The boys are quick to explore and soon settle into a routine, as does their father; however, only Joel is familiar with blackened ruin perched above them, the husk of the abattoir, and the verdant palms that seem to be everywhere. In marked contrast, Greta wrestles with the eerie, thick lush land and the oppressive heat. And then there is the utter strangeness of *all* living things in this part of the world – including the curlew's sad wailing – and an especially enigmatic, mysterious young waif whom she tries to befriend.

This rich, atmospheric debut envelops the reader. It's big and bold, romantic and earthy, even as it reveals the pain and secrets of generational trauma. It is also a love letter – to family, to the land, to home, and to the power of the imagination and storytelling, especially that of fairy tales.



Karen Manton has won a raft of prizes for her short stories. In 2017 she was the first recipient of the Varuna–Arts NT residency. She recently relocated with her own family to Darwin from Batchelor, Northern Territory. This is her debut novel.

Structural edited mss available February 2021; approx 83,000 words, literary fiction/contemporary gothic.

ANZ rights: Allen & Unwin to publish in September 2021.

Rights: All other rights exc. ANZ available.

FICTION

WHERE LIGHT MEETS WATER

Susan Paterson

Thomas Rutherford is a poor, fatherless Scots boy sent to sea at thirteen. Over the years he becomes determined to captain his own ship and have his own crew. Yet more than a fine sailor he is also an artist, with a remarkable sensitivity to colour. In 1847 and at the age of twenty-eight, Tom has a layover in London and travels to Richmond to paint. There he meets Catherine Ogilvie, wealthy, headstrong and also a lover of art. She becomes intrigued and hires him as her painting tutor. Their love blossoms and they marry, though Tom chafes at the strictures of high society and, despite his devotion to his wife, longs to return to sea. They have a son, James, who Tom dotes on, though he continues to sail to distant lands – splitting his time on water and on land for several years – until arriving home he finds Catherine has died and her brother has demanded to be James’s primary carer on condition that Tom relinquishes all parental rights. Tom believes this is best for James’s future while, deep in grief, he loses his entire family.

He sails to Melbourne, Australia, where gold fever reigns, to start over. Fortunately his good friend and ship’s doctor Seamus joins him. Tom also befriends young orphan Charlie who over time becomes a surrogate son of sorts. Slowly he starts to heal and begins to paint again and to exhibit. In 1862 the three move to New Zealand and are happy there until years later a letter arrives from James, urging Tom to meet him in Yokohama. Out of fear of losing Charlie, he does not reveal his purpose. When the ship languishes in the doldrums, Tom reviews his life so far lived and what it means to be a father. He practises what he will say to James, and confesses his purpose to Charlie before the wind picks up and Yokohama beckons.

Art, nature, freedom and travel are central to this tale’s telling (and in the latter respect there are also shades of Patrick O’Brian). At its heart, however, it is a multi-stranded novel of love – of a man and a woman, a sailor and the sea, an artist and his gift, of male friendship, and of a father and his son.



Susan Paterson is a New Zealand-born writer and editor who lives in Melbourne. *Where Light Meets Water* was shortlisted for the 2019 Michael Gifkins Prize for an Unpublished Novel. Her comes from her great-great-great grandfather, Master Mariner, Captain Thomas Robertson, also an oil painter, whose works are housed in ANZ: <http://collections.anmm.gov.au/people/1530>.

Structural edited mss available July 2021; approx 95,000 words, historical/literary fiction. ANZ rights: Simon & Schuster to publish in May 2022. Rights: All other rights exc. ANZ available.

FICTION

THE STRANGER

Kathryn Hore

In the isolated fort town of Darkwater sixteen-year-old Chelsea is proud of how she's bettered herself in becoming the mistress of the town's leader, Granger, the man who rules on all decisions made, including keeping others out so the residents don't catch any of the virals.

Chelsea's life is more comfortable than it's ever been, yet something isn't quite right. And why *are* the men digging so many more wells? The grim, secret truth is supplies are running out. So it's a surprise to everyone that after months of no visitors a Stranger not only comes to town, but is allowed in. A further surprise is that it's a woman, and another that she has some scores to settle.

A curious Chelsea heads for the Hotel, which is where nearly all things happen, and where her darling Suse is kept prisoner in her room upstairs. At the Hotel the Stranger beats several of Granger's flunkies at cards, then she beats them again – physically this time – once they attack her. This is only a portent of things to come. Why *has* this woman come to Darkwater?

Chelsea becomes bewitched by what the Stranger's plans might be and offers to help, even as that puts her at risk too. Things escalate soon after and within 24 hours the entire township has been turned on its head and forever changed.

As well as the naïve yet wily Chelsea and the enigmatic Stranger there are many colourful locals such as Rass, Granger's chief muscle; Miss Kenzie, the schoolmistress; Pepper, the town's madam; Christian, the Hotel's barkeep and father to Suse; and the incomparable, indomitable Mother Jones, who is the wisest of them all.



Kathryn Hore has a special interest in speculative fiction and thrillers. Her short stories have been published widely and her first novel, an underworld thriller, *Wildcard*, will be published in 2021. She lives in Melbourne.

Mss available February 2021; approx 83,000 words, literary–spec fiction.

Currently on ANZ submission: EOIs by 12 February with signs it may go to auction