

**Other titles in the UWAP Poetry series  
(established 2016)**

*Our Lady of the Fence Post* by J. H. Crone

*Border Security* by Bruce Dawe

*Melbourne Journal* by Alan Loney

*Star Struck* by David McCooey

*Dark Convicts* by Judy Johnson

*Rallying* by Quinn Eades

*Flute of Milk* by Susan Fealy

*A Personal History of Vision* by Luke Fischer

*Snake Like Charms* by Amanda Joy

*Charlie Twirl* by Alan Gould

*Afloat in Light* by David Adès

*Communists Like Us* by John Falzon

*Preparations for Departure* by Nathanael O'Reilly

## **Praise for Previous Work**

Conversational, intelligent, wide-ranging and witty, Hecq's poetry is distinguished, too, by its acerbic tone and its confidence—LISA GORTON

... roaming in her poetry between experimentation and high tradition... Hecq targets the self-reflexive play of language—ANTHONY LYNCH

This is erudite writing with a reflexive impulse. With flashes of humour—in even its darkest material. Writing with a restless heart—NOËLLE JANANCZEWSKA

... Hecq displays her predominant interest in celebrating poetry and word to relate the life that is given to the reader—VIVIENNE PLUMB

... Hecq's writing shows us that the power of language lies less in what words can say than in what worlds of experience their music can evoke—HELEN GILFIND

A work of high originality and courage, which composes a new music, compelling and uncanny, by sounding the often untranslatable abyss between beings and sexes—MARION MAY CAMPBELL

... readers will come away feeling renewed, invigorated, deeply inspired by Hecq's unique talent—RICHARD HILLMAN

The uncanny pleasures of this text are many—the precision of the language, the weaving of myth into the everyday, the distinctiveness of the narrative voice, the poetic conjunction of events—FIONA CAPP

*Out of Bounds* probes the rhetoric of chance invoked as a symbolic structure. Violent, active, disturbing—MICHAEL FARRELL

A fascinating and deeply engrossing philosophical fable... In *Out of Bounds* Hecq has created a superb personal scripture—ALI ALIZADEH

In *Couchgrass*, Dominique Hecq breaks through the surfaces of the everyday to reach the garden of tangled connections in which we find our life roots—MARIA TAKOLANDER

Like poetry itself, couchgrass spreads everywhere despite one's best efforts to eradicate it. Invasive, rhizomic, a denizen of cracks and crannies, couchgrass also has antibiotic properties. Like couchgrass, Dominique Hecq's latest book will establish its little fibrous roots even in the mind's most unpropitious earth—JUSTIN CLEMENS

## **Books by Dominique Hecq**

- (2017) with Julian Novitz, eds. *Creative Writing with Critical Theory: Inhabitation*. Canterbury: Gylphi.
- (2015) *Towards a Poetics of Creative Writing*. Bristol; Buffalo; Toronto: Multilingual Matters.
- (2015) with Russell Grigg and Craig Smith, eds. *Female Sexuality: The Early Psychoanalytic Controversies*. London: Karnac Books. (Republished)
- (2014) *Stretchmarks of Sun*. Melbourne: Re.Press. [Poetry]
- (2012) *The Creativity Market: Creative Writing in the 21st Century*. Bristol; Buffalo; Toronto: Multilingual Matters.
- (2009) *Out of Bounds*. Prahran, Vic: Re.Press. [Poetry]
- (2006) *Couchgrass*. Linton, Vic: Papyrus Publishing. [Poetry]
- (2004) *Noisy Blood: Stories*. Scarsdale, Vic: Papyrus Publishing. [Short Stories]
- (2002) *Good Grief: and Other Frivolous Journeys into Spells, Songs and Elegies*. Scarsdale, Vic: Papyrus Publishing. [Poetry]
- (2000) *The Book of Elsa*. Upper Ferntree Gully, Vic: Papyrus Publishing. [Novel]
- (2000) *Magic and Other Stories*. Macclesfield, Vic: Woorilla. [Short Stories]
- (1999) with Russell Grigg and Craig Smith *Female Sexuality: The Early Psychoanalytic Controversies*. London: Rebus Press.
- (1999) *The Gaze of Silence*. Enfield Plaza, South Australia: Sidewalk Collective. [Poetry]
- (1999) *Mythfits: Four Uneasy Pieces*. Blackburn, Vic: PenFolk Publishing. [Short Stories]

## **Dominique Hecq**

Dominique Hecq grew up in the French-speaking part of Belgium. She read Germanic Philology at the University of Liège and then flew over to Australia where she completed a PhD on exile in Australian Literature. She also holds an MA in Literary Translation. Dominique is the author of a novel, three collections of short fiction, five books of poetry and two plays. Her awards include The New England Review Prize for Poetry (2005), The Martha Richardson Medal for Poetry (2006), and the inaugural AALITRA Prize for Literary Translation in poetry from Spanish into English (2014). *Hush: a fugue* (2017) is her latest book of poetry.

Dominique Hecq  
**Hush**  
a fugue

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for David

The spirit-child is an unwilling adventurer into chaos and  
sunlight, into the dreams of the living child

**Ben Okri**



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*1110: One Photograph One Story Ten Poems* 2: “Oranges and Lemons”

*Double Dialogues: In/Stead* 3: “Alabaster”

*Double Dialogues* 17: “Reading in Braille”

*Centoria* 4: “Strawberries”

*Food and Appetites: The Hunger Artist and the Arts* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012): “Blue Like an Orange”

*Good Grief* (Papyrus Publishing, 2002): “Strawberries”

*La Traductière* 30: “Reading in Braille”

*Meniscus* 1:1: “Tomorrow, the Sun”

*Meniscus* 2:2: “Felt”

*Offshoot* (University of Western Australia Publishing, 2017): “Quickening”

*TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Courses* Special Issue 7: “Glitter”

*TEXT Journal of Writing and Writing Courses* 15:2: “Oranges and Lemons”

*TEXT Journal of Writing and Writing Courses* Special Issue 35: “Crypts of Making”

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*Towards a Poetics of Creative Writing* (Multilingual Matters 2015): “Blue Like an Orange”

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Led astray by a smattering of wild strawberries one early morning in June, I wandered off into the neighbour's garden. I was not aware of doing anything odd: a scent of roses, carnations and a late-blooming lilac, the sheer beauty of the lime tree showering pollen. I was startled by my grandmother's troubled and insistent voice calling out for me. Calling out. Calling.

It is some thirty years after my grandmother's troubled search for me that I recalled, on the loss of my second son, that quiet dawn in the garden all the way back in the northern hemisphere.

*Eurydice, Eurydice, Eurydice.*

Three times Orpheus called in vain. That passage in the Underworld haunts me. So did the many paintings and stories of children lost in the Bush when I first came to Australia, especially the tragic tale of three young boys who wandered off at dusk into the chill of one June day one hundred and fifty years ago, never to return.

The little girl at dawn  
in her night gown  
sun smattered  
strawberries in her hands  
opens the world and sweet  
ripe words spill

Where is she?

My grandmother had a secret reason to be worried about losing me. I now recall finding myself staring at the photo of baby Zeno, her

second child, weirdly dressed in his cot. A white cloth binds his head. He is wearing a long white dress; pinned on it, a Sacred Heart badge. The photo is black and white and so I can only imagine the colours. The heart is red and bleeding.

I must have wondered why baby Zeno looked so much like a porcelain doll. I must have asked why.

Shh, shh, shh, Zeno is in heaven, said my grandmother with a mixture of sadness and shock in her voice. You must say a prayer for him, and apologise to God for calling him baby Zero.

In the year 1994 I lost a brother and a child, one to a freak accident, the other to ill-health. All lies. But how to speak of suicide and cot-death in a family where life is meant to be a gift? My grandmother did not survive these lies. She lost the will to live after my brother's death. The news of my baby's sudden death most certainly hastened her own. Like me, she stopped eating. Like me, she stopped speaking.

The little girl at dawn  
in her night gown  
sun smattered  
strawberries in her hands  
opens the world and sweet  
ripe words spill

The truth is in between. It is the story stripped of guilt and fear, for neither fear nor guilt feed the imagination needed to go on living.

What are we made of but longing and sorrow, love and loss? Bruised strawberries in the morning sun.

Grief becomes an echo of echoes, a chancy affair for which we can't be prepared. In this echoing, the voice of Orpheus calls:

*Eurydice, Eurydice, Eurydice.*

**M**orning hail

gusts of wind

moaning

Halfway through 1994, I believed the worst of the year was over. We lived in a rented house in the inner suburbs of Melbourne. It was a changeable house. Sometimes it felt safe as a church, and sometimes it shivered and cracked apart. A sloping slate roof held it down, pressing heat on us in summer, blowing cold in winter. What kept the house together was skin. Walls of cream gristle called *crépi*.

It was June 30th, an ordinary crisp winter day. Sunshine and magpies everywhere. After lunch, I took the children for a walk. His hands barely reaching the pram's handle, my first-born insisted on pushing his baby brother. Along the Merri Creek, there were egrets and ibises and ducks. Some turtles and tiny frogs. We sang duck songs and frog songs. I made up a magpie story as we passed a whole family of them. We bought quinces on the way back and I baked an upside-down quince cake. I was almost getting serious about planting winter vegetables, cornflowers and the last bulbs of irises, jonquils and ranunculi before nightfall when I decided against it.

Nights close early in June. Everything seems to stand still, bleak, even gloomy by five. I bundled the children inside the house, drew the curtains and flicked on the lights. It felt safe despite the cold air curling at our feet.

When I turned off the lights well after bed-time, I looked through the window. The roses looked dead but for a few white buds on their maimed limbs.

Why is white white?

Chalk, rice, zinc

Crystal falls

Limestone graves

Phosphorus

Lightless body

Alabaster

I woke up in the night, chilled as the whites in a Dutch still-life painting.

A still-life belongs to time, and we to this stillness.

In his cot, my baby's face was white wax  
as if smothered by the moon itself.

His lips were black.

My voice died out in my scream.

My voice died out in my scream.

Life goes on, they say. Life goes on leaving  
me—a hiatus.

I became the copula between life and death.

An object with no voice.

*Mère* echo oooooooooo

Why is white white?

Chalk, rice, zinc  
Crystal falls  
Limestone graves

Phosphorus  
Lightless body  
Alabaster

*Mère* echo oooooooooo

Why is white white?

An orchestra  
in a guitar  
colour cascades

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