

The Write Stuff

<https://www.helensvalewritersgroup.org>

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – August 2026

This month's speakers:

Our convenor is in the final stages of selecting the speakers for this month's meeting. I'll advise details in the "reminder" email I'm sending a few days before. There's a good chance that we'll have a workshop, which will address one of the most underrated items to stir your reader's memories... Watch out for that email, on or about 17th August, then come to our meeting on Thursday, 20th August!



All about music with writing

Or should that be writing with music? Whatever, the July meeting was... **different!** How? Read on.

Susie Groundwater: 'Using AI to turn poems into music'



Susie discovered an app that uses AI to turn your writing into a hit song. To demonstrate, she took one of her poems to generate a hit song, but she didn't compose the music. It was all created by Artificial Intelligence. This was not some ordinary jingle, this was SOUND, in this example, a powerful, jazzy female voice. If you are a registered member of this group, you should have received an email with Susie's poem and instructions, as well as the resultant music file attached. If you didn't get it, please reply to the email this

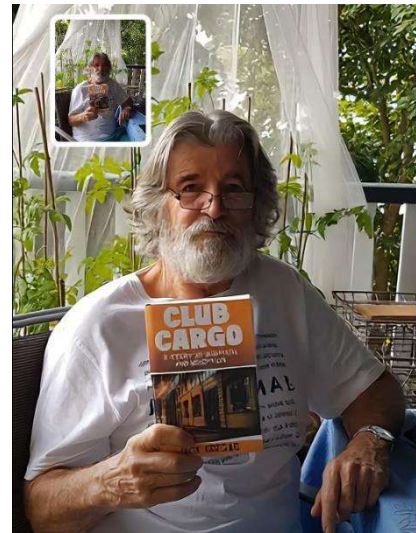
newsletter was sent to you, and I'll send you another copy.

In my four square years, I've come across a lot of stuff that generated genuine wonderment. Watching the moon landing, seeing a Mirage jet fighter from close up, attending a performance of Richard Wagner's Tannhäuser at Sydney Opera House... This music might not be in the class of Wagner, but then, Wagner took three years to write it Tannhäuser. This came up in a minute or so. To experience the same reaction I did, I suggest you **READ THE POEM FIRST**, THEN listen to the musical version (the MP3 file). For those who came late: the publisher of the app is called Sono. Navigate to <https://suno.com/> Please note: any poem you haven't written yourself is copyright.

Yes, this is what AI does. On the one hand, it is simply amazing. On the other hand, if I was a composer of popular music, I'd be just a little bit frightened.

Jack Kregas: 'How to make a book cover that plays Stereo Sound Pictures'

Jack went the proverbial 'extra mile', expanding the original subject beyond just how to make sound to promote your work. He touched writer's block (in short: when you have your own challenges, write it down. There is a story behind it!), the psychology of writing, (or 'The mysticism of being an author'). But, as promised, his main subject was on **how to get your name and your work in front of potential buyers**. "Did you know that about 1.5 Million books are published every year?" his shaking-up comments came fast. "Most authors never sell more than 100 copies of their book." Why? Publishing a book (via a publishing house) costs around \$25,000. How come? If you want to publish yourself, you need to pull all the stops, in particular Social Media. But **Social Media by itself doesn't sell books. Followers do!** How to get followers? Well, here is where Jack's presentation's "rubber hit the road". Putting up a short 10 seconds video for your Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok and swag of other Social Media sites is one method. Jack claimed his Tik-Tok followers climbed from 2000 – 5000 in consequence. If you weren't there: Click on this [Facebook Link](#) for a sample. All his books are on his website too <https://www.jackkregasbooks.com/>



1000 Words Competition – Q3, 2026:

Submissions close on 10th September. The theme: 'The Face at the Window'. Genre: it's OPEN – take your pick, from crime to romance, historical fiction, non-fiction, chick-lit, children's stories, fantasy. Anything! The usual rules apply: 1000 words maximum (including title), no pictures, no Artificial Intelligence (we'll test). **Deadline is Thursday, 10th September 2026 (one week before our September meeting),** and no late entries will be accepted. Please submit in **MS Word or Google Doc format, NOT PDF,** to helensvalewriters@gmail.com

Note: Copyright remains with the author. This is a private, group-internal competition, and thus does not preclude you from submitting your story to any open competition, nor, as our end-of-year compilation cannot be purchased on the market, can it be considered as "previously published".



Upcoming Writers Competitions

- OK, so you need some time: Here is one that closes in a few months. Why not aim for the top: [The Long List for the Booker Prize](#) has just been announced. "You're kidding me!" I hear you yell out. But, according to their website, entries are "Tonally diverse, the books abound with humour and heartbreak, satire and surreality. That's you, isn't it? And, if I recall correctly, **three of this year's long list authors are first time entrants.**
- The [The Hope Prize 2026](#): This is now open. A **global** short story competition open to writers from **anywhere in the world**. Maximum 5000 words. **\$13,000 prize money!** Deadline: 31/10/26. Make sure you read the guidelines.
- There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on [reedsy.com](https://www.reedsy.com) – There must be one or two that suit you!

Can you improve on that?

It is a pleasant thing to behold the tamedness of animals. Our greatest delight is to see all the varieties of domestication parade before us. This it is which collects so many folks on the road of royal processions. Victor Hugo – The Man Who Laughs

Be there on **Thursday, 20th August. Usual time 10:00 am.**
Helensvale Library, downstairs meeting room. Please be a little bit early, so we can start on time.

Best wishes,
Franz Huber
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*Our member Margaret Wright sent me a really funny video, recording a speech by famous humour writer Frederik Bachmann. **Click on the image on the right** to view it.*

A young writer holds his first presentation at the local library. In the audience is one of the local gazette's most feared literary critics, who said to the young man: "Would you like to hear my opinion of your work?"

"Yes please" replies the writer.

"It's worthless."

"I know," the writer replies, "but let's hear it anyway..."



*The power of correct placement of words: Put the word '**only**' anywhere in the sentence below....*

She told the Paladin that
she kills Goblins.