

ANNAMARIA WELDON – BIO NOTES FOR MEDIA – March 2014

“This kind of writing – the fruit of real contemplation, informed by a wide range of ideas, respectful of the reader’s intellect and imagination, driven by an empirical sensibility – is, for me, where the best “nature writing” is to be found.”

Barry Lopez, on reading *The Lake’s Apprentice*

“This is an act of pilgrimage in writing: Annamaria Weldon seeks, and finds; she advances with tact and attention, she gives her readers the gift of seeing landscape with new eyes.”

Nicolas Rothwell, cover comment *The Lake’s Apprentice*

Annamaria Weldon’s book of her essays, poems and photographs, *The Lake’s Apprentice* (UWA Publishing 2014) is based on her experiences of Yalgorup National Park. She has two earlier poetry collections, *The Roof Milkens* (Sunline Press 2008) and *Ropes of Sand* (Associated Press, Malta 1983).

Yalgorup is on the coast 100 kilometres south of Fremantle, Western Australia, where Annamaria lives and writes. Its wetlands, and the thrombolites of Lake Clifton, inspired *Adaptation*, a cross-disciplinary eco-art investigation hosted by SymbioticA at The University of Western Australia 2008-2012. Weldon, *Adaptation* Writer-in-Residence, wrote *Threshold Country* which won the inaugural Nature Conservancy Australia Essay Prize for Nature Writing, and the 3 sonnet suite *The memory of earth* which won The Tom Collins Poetry Prize awarded by the Fellowship of Australian Writers. Both prizes were announced in February 2011.

Annamaria was born in Malta, spent her first ten years in North Africa, Central America and the UK, and returned to the island in 1960 to complete her education. She began work as a newspaper feature-writer in 1978, and was first published as a poet (*Ropes of Sand*, Associated News, Malta) in 1983. She moved to Perth in 1984, where she wrote for The West Australian newspaper for several years. She has also worked in public relations, as a freelance journalist, a journal editor and manager of care and accommodation for the aged.

Her creative writing has been published in Australian literary journals and anthologies including *Science Made Marvellous* (Poets Union), *Australian Book Review* (ABR), *Island*, *Westerly*, *Stylus* and others, broadcast on ABC Radio national’s *Poetica* and *Short Story* programs, recorded on CDs and DVDs, presented as theatre with music and dance.

Annamaria writes about place, navigating natural science, local tradition and personal stories. Artistic collaborations across disciplines, media, cultures and in community are a key part of her practice. She gratefully acknowledges Noongar Bindjareb cultural leader, musician, and teacher George Walley as a mentor. While she was writing *The Lake’s Apprentice*, they performed together at NAIDOC sessions and facilitated community writing workshops sponsored by writingWA, City of Mandurah, Country Arts Network WA and Community First International.

Weldon’s photos of the Lake Clifton thrombolites have been exhibited at UWA’s new Science Library’s opening exhibition *Evolution* and the 2010 Museums Australia exhibition *Wetlands – from Bunyip to Beautiful*, toured with *Art on the Move*, and published in *Artsource*, *Science Matters*, *Terrain.org*, *Landscape*, by Peel-Harvey Catchment Council, *Greens WA*, on Apps and DVDs.

Working with students and writers of all ages, she has presented writing sessions for Poets Union, Denmark Arts, WA Poets Inc. and the Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAWWA), primary and secondary schools and universities. She is a founding member of the Fremantle-based Out of the Asylum Writers (OOTA), and in 2012 was named a Fellow by FAWWA.