

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE2115

Johnston, Dorothy

(1948 -)

Born 1 January, 1948, Geelong Victoria Australia

Occupation Author, Novelist, Poet, Writer

Summary

Dorothy Johnston is an award-winning novelist, poet, short story writer, and author of reviews and literary essays. Her crime writing portrays the darker side of Canberra.

(This entry is sponsored by generous donation from Christine Foley.)

Details

Dorothy Johnston was born in Geelong, Victoria, in 1948. She trained as a teacher at the University of Melbourne, taught English, and was an education researcher. She moved to Canberra in 1979.

Johnston's books include *Tunnel Vision* (1984), *Ruth* (1986), *Maralinga My Love* (1988), *One For The Master* (1997), *The Trojan Dog* (2000) and *The House at Number 10* (2005).

Johnston's short stories have appeared in numerous anthologies, including *Amnesty* (1993), *Mother Love* (1996) and *Below The Waterline* (1999), and her essays and reviews have appeared in numerous literary journals.

Johnston says 'crime fiction is my way of writing about Canberra'. *The Trojan Dog* is about white collar crime in a government department, while *The House at Number 10* is set in a Canberra brothel, inspired by the ACT's decriminalisation of prostitution. Writing about Canberra is, she says, relatively scarce, and she considers herself to be partially redressing this imbalance in Australian literature.

Johnston was a member of Seven Writers – a group of seven Canberra-based writers whose work vividly portrays life 'beneath the surface of Canberra' – and as part of this collective she contributed to *Canberra Tales* (1988), republished as *The Division of Love* in 1996, an anthology of short stories about life in Canberra. The work was funded with an ACT Bicentennial grant.

Her other awards include:

Miles Franklin Award (shortlisted, 1986 and 1997)

ABC Bicentennial Literature Award (shortlisted)

ACT Book of the Year (joint winner 2001),

Inaugural Davitt Award for the best crime novel published by a woman (runner up, 2000)

The Age Best of 2000, crime section.

Johnston has also run book groups through the Centre for Continuing Education at The Australian National University.

In 2005 she took up an Australia Council residency at Ledig House International Writer's Colony in the United States.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book

The House at Number 10, Johnston, Dorothy, 2005

The Division of Love: Stories, Barbalet, Margaret et al, 1995

Maralinga, my love, Johnston, Dorothy, 1988

One for the Master, Johnston, Dorothy, 1997

Ruth, Johnston, Dorothy, 1986

The Trojan Dog, Johnston, Dorothy, 2000

Tunnel Vision, Johnston, Dorothy, 1984

Site Exhibition

From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg>

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

Records of the Seven Writers group, between 1986 and approximately 2000

Maralinga cycle, 1988 [manuscript]

Author Details

Barbara Lemon

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Digital resources

Title: Dorothy Johnston

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