The following texts proposed by the English Text Advisory Panel have been approved by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as suitable for study in Units 3 and 4 in 2013. Texts were selected in accordance with the following criteria and guidelines. The number of texts listed has been amended for 2013 to 21 for List 1, with the inclusion of nine novels.

Criteria for text selection

Each text selected for the VCE English and English/EAL text lists will:

1. have literary merit and be worthy of close study
2. be an excellent example of form and genre
3. sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and providing challenging ideas
4. be appropriate for both male and female students
5. be appropriate for the age and development of students and, in that context, reflect current community standards and expectations.

The text list as a whole will:

1. be suitable for a wide range of students, including second language students
2. reflect the cultural diversity of the Victorian community
3. include a balance of new and established works
4. include texts that display affirming perspectives.

Guidelines for text list

The text list for VCE English/EAL must:

1. Contain a total of 37 available texts:
   - 21 (List 1: Area of Study 1)
   - 16 (List 2: Area of Study 2) four for each Context:
     - The imaginative landscape
     - Whose reality?
     - Encountering conflict
     - Exploring issues of identity and belonging.
     - 9 novels
     - 2 collections of short stories
     - 2 collections of poetry or songs
     - 3 plays
     - 3 non-fiction texts.
   - Plus two from the following, depending on relevance to the Context:
     - Plays
     - Short stories
     - Poetry
     - Other Literature

2. Represent the full range of texts indicated in the study design in the following approximate proportions:
   - Area of Study 1: List 1 (21 texts)
     - 9 novels
     - 2 collections of short stories
     - 2 collections of poetry or songs
     - 3 plays
     - 3 non-fiction texts.
   - Area of Study 2: List 2 (16 texts)
     - 1 novel
     - 1 film text
     - Plus two from the following, depending on relevance to the Context:
       - Plays
       - Short stories
       - Poetry
       - Other Literature

3. Contain at least five texts for List 1, four texts for List 2 (one in each Context) by or about Australians

4. Contain print and film texts that are widely available, preferably for sale.

5. Contain no titles in common with those on the VCE Literature list.

6. Be reviewed annually with approximately 25 per cent of the texts being changed; no text should appear for more than four consecutive years or fewer than two years.

7. Be accompanied by full bibliographic details where necessary.
Text selection – advice to schools

Texts for study in Units 3 and 4 English/EAL are grouped into two lists: List 1 for Area of Study 1, Reading and Responding, which focuses on the reading of a range of literary texts to develop critical and supported responses in relation to Outcome 1; and List 2 for Area of Study 2, Creating and Presenting, which focuses on reading and writing and their interconnection, in relation to Outcome 2.

Teachers should consider the lists in conjunction with the relevant Text Selection advice published on page 23 of the VCE English/EAL Study Design 2008-2014 for Units 3 and 4.

A film text may be selected from List 1 or List 2 but not both. Students are not permitted to write about more than one film in the examination.

At least one of the selected texts in each of Units 3 and 4 should be an imaginative print text such as a novel, a play, a collection of short stories or poetry.

At least one of the selected texts should be by an Australian or about Australians.

The annotations are provided to assist teachers with selection of texts in accordance with the requirements in the VCE English/EAL study design. It is important to avoid genre confusion. A film version of a novel, short story, play or non-fiction text is not acceptable for purposes of the examination, although it might be used in the classroom for teaching purposes.

Note: While the VCAA considers all the texts on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that with some texts there may be sensitivities in relation to certain issues. In selecting texts for study, teachers should make themselves aware of these issues prior to introducing the text to students.

Key to codes

This list is presented alphabetically by author, grouped according to the kind of text. Abbreviations in brackets after the titles signify:

(A) This text meets the Australian requirement
(#) Bracketed numbers indicate the number of years that a text or Context has appeared on the English text list.

List 1

Novels
Amsterdam, Steven, Things We Didn’t See Coming (A) (3)
Atwood, Margaret, Cat’s Eye (2)
Bronte, Emily, Wuthering Heights (1)
Brooks, Geraldine, Year of Wonders (A) (4)
Dickens, Charles, A Christmas Carol (3)
Hamid, Mohsin, The Reluctant Fundamentalist (3)
Malouf, David, Ransom (A) (3)
Matar, Hisham, In the Country of Men (1)
Töibin, Colm, Brooklyn (1)

Short stories
Carver, Raymond, Will You Please Be Quiet, Please? (2)


Lahiri, Jhumpa, Interpreter of Maladies (4)

Plays
Nowra, Louis, Cosi (A) (4)
Rose, Reginald, Twelve Angry Men (3)
Shakespeare, William, Henry IV Part 1 (2)

Poetry/Songs
Owen, Wilfred, The War Poems (2)
Harwood, Gwen, Selected Poems (A) (1)

Film texts
The Old Man Who Read Love Stories (Director: Rolf de Heer) (A) (3)
On the Waterfront (Director: Elia Kazan) (4)

Non-fiction texts
Edelman, Bernard, Dear America – Letters Home from Vietnam (4)
McGirr, Michael, Bypass: the story of a road (A) (4)
Funder, Anna, Stasiland (A) (1)

List 2

The imaginative landscape
Anderson, Jessica, Tirra Lirra by the River (A) (4)
Kinsella, John, Peripheral Light – Selected and New Poems (A) (2)
Munro, Alice, The View from Castle Rock (1)
One Night the Moon (Director: Rachel Perkins) (A) (3)

Whose reality?
Frayn, Michael, Spies (3)
Leunig, Michael, The Lot: In Words (A) (2)
Miller, A, Death of a Salesman (1)
The Player, (Director: Robert Altman) (4)

Encountering conflict
Brecht, Bertolt, Life of Galileo (1)
Greene, Graham, The Quiet American (2)
Hillman, R & Mazari, N, The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif (A) (4)
Paradise Road, (Director: Bruce Beresford) (A) (3)

Exploring issues of identity and belonging
Lawler, Ray, Summer of the Seventeenth Doll (A) (1)
McCullers, Carson, Member of the Wedding (3)
Pung, Alice, Growing Up Asian in Australia (A) (4)
Skin, (Director: Anthony Fabian) (2)
Annotations
These annotations are provided to assist teachers with text selection. The comments are not intended to represent the only possible interpretation or a favoured reading of a text. The list is arranged alphabetically by author in text types. Films are listed by title. The VCAA does not prescribe editions; any complete edition may be used. The bibliographic information is provided to assist teachers to obtain texts and is correct, as far as possible, at the time of publication. Publishing details may change from time to time and teachers should consult the VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET and VCAA website regularly for any amendments or alterations to the list.

List 1
Novels

Amsterdam, Steven, Things We Didn’t See Coming, Sleepers Publishing, 2009 (A)
Amsterdam’s episodic novel charts an unnamed narrator attempting to navigate his life in unpredictable times. Beginning at the millennium celebrations of 2000, the novel slowly explores a future of political and environmental collapse. A speculative vision of a world beset by extreme political division and implosion, unpredictable weather patterns and government-backed disaster relief teams may seem bleak. However, in asking how people cope when faced with political and personal disasters, this novel ultimately offers hope and a vision of humanity bound by love and the importance of connecting with others.

Atwood, Margaret, Cat’s Eye, Virago Press, 2009
The adult narrator, a Canadian painter of renown, reflects on her childhood. At the heart of her recollection is her frightening friendship with the young Cordelia and her acolytes. The novel examines the shifting and misshapen nature of their relationship with the young Cordelia and her acolytes. The plot may appear to be open-ended, the unresolved nature of that friendship and of memory, and the things left unsaid in families. While these happenings are only a small part of the novel, they are representative of the shifting and misshapen nature of the relationship with the young Cordelia and her acolytes.

Bronte’s classic tale of love and revenge has fascinated readers since its publication in 1847. Considered scandalous upon its release, the unfolding of the love between Catherine and Heathcliff – and the lives that they destroy in the process – still resonates today. Set on the Yorkshire Moors and spanning two generations, the story of the Lintons and the Earnshaws is told using multiple narrators. From moments of tenderness to moments of horror, the novel traverses the range of human emotions. It is a masterpiece of storytelling.

Brooks, Geraldine, Year of Wonders, Fourth Estate, 2001 (A)
The plague year of 1666 brought fear, confusion and grief to a small village in Derbyshire. A maid, Anna Frith narrates her story and so traces the anguish of her community as they endure the terrors of a deadly infectious disease and self-imposed isolation. The community seeks answers in religion and superstitions as the Plague takes its toll physically, mentally and spiritually. The relationships of Anna, the idealistic but driven rector and his troubled wife are central to the unfolding tragedy in the village. The language of this novel reflects its well-researched historical basis as much as the complex nature of its subject matter.

Dickens, Charles, A Christmas Carol, Penguin Classics, 2008
Penguin Classics, 2008
Ebenzer Scrooge. Tiny Tim. The Ghost of Christmas Past. Bob Cratchit. Bah, Humbug! This is a novel about redemption. Scrooge has lost his soul and needs a spooky lesson in reaching out to his fellow man. Also a novel about social justice and the plight of the working poor, it shows ‘wealth-building’ values for what they truly are: greed and pettiness. Don’t confuse the novel with its many film interpretations; Dickens may never have produced a sharper piece of writing than A Christmas Carol. It is, at once, a classic ghost story, a searing polemic, and an utterly compelling narrative about what it is to be human.

Hamid, Mohsin, The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Hamish Hamilton (Penguin), 2008
This provocatively titled novel explores controversial terrain. The narrator, Changez, an American-university educated Pakistani, directly addresses an American companion with whom he is sharing a table outside a café in Pakistan. Changez’s personal and political narrative reveals post-9/11 mistrust and suspicion, and invites the reader to think about these difficult and controversial matters. The novel is rich in irony, exploring views on love, prejudice, lifestyle and the behaviour of individuals and countries. The open ending adds to its fascinating narrative structure and content.

Malouf, David, Ransom, Vintage, 2009 (A)
Malouf re-imagines the world of the Iliad, including a little-known episode of the Trojan Wars. Maddened by Hector’s slaying of his dear friend Patroclus, Achilles takes revenge and subsequently violates Hector’s corpse. Priam, King of Troy and Hector’s father, journeys to Achilles’ camp seeking to ransom his son’s body. He travels in a donkey cart escorted only by the carter but aided by the god Hermes. The mission succeeds, delivering to Priam enrichment in life and legendary status after death. Ransom explores universal themes of paternal pride and love, and liberation of the spirit – as relevant today as in classical Greece.

Matar, Hisham, In the Country of Men, Penguin, 2006
The narrator, Changez, an American-university educated Pakistani, directly addresses an American companion with whom he is sharing a table outside a café in Pakistan. Changez’s personal and political narrative reveals post-9/11 mistrust and suspicion, and invites the reader to think about these difficult and controversial matters. The novel is rich in irony, exploring views on love, prejudice, lifestyle and the behaviour of individuals and countries. The open ending adds to its fascinating narrative structure and content.

SUPPLEMENT 3 – FEBRUARY 2012. UPDATED JUNE 2013
the community has improved, she faces the dilemma of the migrant – the old country or the new? Tóibín lucidly presents two cultures, the dream-like quality that infuses whichever is the current ‘other’, and the seductive power of home.

Short stories

Carver, Raymond, Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?, Vintage, 2003
Raymond Carver’s highly regarded minimalist style provides us with a series of snapshots of ordinary American lives. The characters have difficulty relating to others, experience emptiness, or feel disconnected from both themselves and others, but they also experience the small joys of everyday life. From the tale of a woman who dials a man by mistake or a father who is exasperated by his family’s pet dog, to a young boy who catches a big fish in order to impress his quarrelling parents, Carver’s collection of short stories explores the ways in which our lives are a mix of humour and pathos.

Lahiri, Jhumpa, Interpreter of Maladies, Flamingo (Harper Collins), 2000
Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian writer who has grown up in the USA. Her short stories evoke the lives of Indian émigrés and their children, as they juggle the expectations of Indian traditions and American values. Lahiri also sets stories in India, which creates a further contrast of values and issues. Readers will be seduced by the writing to share the pathos of her unassuming characters, including newlyweds, a Pakistani refugee, a mistress and a caretaker. Lahiri is a master of style, social comedy and observation. She is also a sophisticated creator of plots and memorable endings that have a sting in the tail.

Plays

Nowra, Louis, Cosi, Currency Press, 1994 (A)
Lewis, a young Australian University student, takes a job in 1970 as a director of a play in a mental asylum. Powered by one of the more flamboyant characters, they put on a performance of Mozart’s Cosi Fan Tutte. The play within the play echoes many of the characters’ own concerns. Their responses to the Vietnam War and the treatment of women, and their attempts to accept others are all key issues in the play. Cosi also examines the divisive nature of society, and the arbitrary reasons given for those who are excluded.

Rose, Reginald, Twelve Angry Men, Samuel French Ltd, 1997
The play takes its audience into the jury room where a group of twelve men is performing its civic duty. Through the jury’s interactions, each man reveals himself more fully: his strengths, weaknesses and above all his prejudices. The eighth juror is initially alone in opposing a ‘guilty’ verdict, but as the members of the jury deliberate, we see at work a judicial system that values the right of the accused to be ‘innocent until proved guilty’ and the duty of a jury to explore ‘reasonable doubt’.

Shakespeare, William, Henry IV Part One, Penguin, 2005
Prince Hal is a rebel. He has rejected his position at court for the less than salubrious London underworld. His companions are thieves, drunks, and women of dubious reputation. His father, the eponymous Henry IV, is not amused, having come to the throne himself in a coup and needing now to find a way to retain the crown. Henry IV, Part One, Shakespeare’s finest history, is sharp, suspenseful, and witty. It features the irrepresible Sir John Falstaff whose language is thought by some to transcend even that of Hamlet. It is a play about fathers and sons, enemies and friends, loyalty and betrayal, with the best elements of the playwright’s tragedies and comedies.

Poetry

Wilfred Owen is regarded as the greatest of the World War I poets. His poems explore the futility of war and its physical and psychological toll on front-line soldiers. Owen also challenges the glorified notion of dying for one’s country. He highlights the contradictions between the realities of the battlefield and the pointlessness of death. His poems reflect an intimate understanding of being a soldier in the trenches and his descriptions are sharp and brutally honest, as revealed in his most famous poems: ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’, ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’ and ‘Futility.’

Harwood, Gwen, Selected Poems, Penguin, 2001 (A)
Gwen Harwood is one of Australia’s finest poets. Her work deals with a range of subjects, from the relationships between children and parents and the domestic aspects of women’s lives, to the impact of societal expectations on individual identity and the role of art and memory in shaping subjectivity. Harwood’s poetry both masters and challenges poetic forms and conventions. The poems experiment with voice, play with language and are often underpinned by a deeply-grounded, satirical wit.
**Film texts**

*The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*, Director: Rolf de Heer, 2001 (A)

Adapted from Luis Sepulveda’s short novel, de Heer’s film evokes the magic realism for which South American writing is justifiably famous. Our hero, an isolated old man, goes out with his side-kicks and his weapons to hunt the jaguar. Physical courage, though, is matched by the old man’s determination to read. His ultimate reward will be a kiss from his true love ‘to remember our lives by’. De Heer works with words, both written and spoken, to create a complex story about respect for people and animals, indigenous-settler contact, communication, fear, love, wisdom and passion. The jungle dentistry scenes may appear more barbarous than humorous, but an important theme of the film is that ‘the barbarity of man can be conquered by love’. (Classification: PG)

*On the Waterfront*, Director: Elia Kazan, 1954

This black and white film was a controversial release in 1954. Kazan’s exploration of tensions between employers and employees on the New York waterfront is worthy of close study for both its visual elements and its key concerns. Themes of human redemption and forgiveness, the permeating influence of corruption and the harsh realities of working class life are exposed through the main character, Terry Malloy. Malloy, guilt stricken after luring a friend to his death for a corrupt union boss, undergoes a moral transformation as the love of the dead friend’s sister shows him the way to redemption. The composition, sound-effects, angles and lighting of Kazan’s award-winning film beautifully expose the difficulties of breaking free from the grip of the mob. (Classification: M)

**Non-fiction texts**


The foreword to this informative and emotionally powerful collection of letters, posted home by American soldiers serving in the Vietnam War, tells us that ‘the important thing was to write’. Written in a range of voices and styles, the letters humanise the soldiers by taking the reader into their world. Some letters are plain, unadorned descriptions of fighting whilst others are surprisingly literary, even poetic. These young letter writers reveal day to day routines of war as well as honest, fundamental human emotions. Poignantly combining private feelings with the public political issues, Edelman’s collection amply illustrates that ‘there are no simple truths about the Vietnam War’.


Accompanied by a copy of Anna Karenina, McGirr takes his reader on a humorous bicycle journey from Sydney to Melbourne along Australia’s busiest road, the Hume Highway. It is not only a journey of self-discovery after a life-changing decision to leave the priesthood, but also a journey through Australian history and geography. As McGirr travels through bypassed towns, he has time to chat with the locals and to observe the links, both personal and historical, that Australians have with the road. In a quirky, witty and life-affirming narrative, McGirr tells stories of the features, landmarks and curiosities he sees as well as relating personal stories of the people he meets. He highlights the fact that journeys are not only physical but can also guide us to some place deeper inside ourselves.

Funder, Anna, *Stasiland*, Text Publishing, 2011 (A)

The German Democratic Republic’s rule was ‘Either you are for us or an enemy!’ One in every 6.5 East Germans was a Stasi employee, spying on fellow citizens. When the GDR fell, they shredded all the files. Sometime later, thirty-one people sit in one room reconstructing the files (had they forty workers it would take 375 years). Anna Funder advertised for ex Stasi, East German Secret Service; she interviewed them and their victims. Compelling accounts of the insidiousness of the Stasi emerge, horrific yet sometimes amusing. The totalitarian state of the GDR is strangely mourned by some of its survivors and forgotten by the rest of Germany.

**List 2**

**The Imaginative Landscape**

**Novel**

Anderson, Jessica, *Tirra Lirra by the River*, Picador (Macmillan) 2006 (A)

When she is in her seventies, Nora Porteous returns to her family home in Brisbane after a long period of expatriation in London. She suddenly falls ill, and during the weeks of her recovery, she slips between the past and the present, Brisbane and London, gradually revealing the often disturbing events that have shaped her life. As Nora’s story unfolds, her reliance on art and poetry to provide an alternative landscape becomes clear, and Anderson examines both the benefits and costs of inhabiting the imagination in this way. Winner of the Miles Franklin Award (1978), this superbly crafted novel is an Australian classic.

**Film**

*One Night the Moon*, Director: Rachel Perkins, 2006 (A)

Set in 1932 against the dramatic, ancient landscape of the Flinders Ranges, *One Night the Moon* explores differing ways that indigenous and non-indigenous Australians relate to the land. The viewer is drawn into the landscape by sparse dialogue coupled with stunning cinematography and music. Characters, including Paul Kelly as the father, sing their inner thoughts and feelings, whilst the camera captures light, darkness, clouds, flora and especially the moon that magically lures a young girl from her home. The image of the ‘lost child’ in the Australian landscape and the powerful use of song and scenery to convey the story combine to capture the imagination of the viewer. (Classification: M)

**Poetry**

Kinsella, John, *Peripheral Light – Selected and New Poems*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2006 (A)

Kinsella’s poetry, much of it set in the Western Australian wheat belt where he grew up, is characterised by the natural beauty and harshness of the landscape and the unnatural changes wrought by man. His exploration of cycles of nature, such as drought and fire, coupled with human intervention, highlights a rural world threatened by salinity, pesticides,
erosion and indigenous dispossession. Many of these poems are foreboding, challenging the pastoral idyll depicted by earlier poets that reflects on beautiful landscapes of the accepted kind. Kinsella’s poems enable students to explore and present their own links to the physical world.

Stories

Munro, Alice, _The View from Castle Rock_, Vintage, 2006
Alice Munro draws on her own family history in this collection of stories. Her eighteenth century ancestors survived the harsh landscape of the Scottish highlands with their fanciful stories, and some of them dreamed of a society which measures a man’s worth by his material success. Trapped among the rising, impersonal life of all humans who strive to preserve their significance in the private and political conflicts of his protagonist, Thomas Fowler, a cynical, aging British journalist. Amidst tension and violence, Fowler struggles to reconcile his credo of non-involvement with his conflicting moral, emotional and ideological views. When Fowler meets Alden Pyle, the ‘quiet American’, he encounters the dangerous innocence of this misguided but well-intentioned ‘soldier of Democracy’. Fowler’s antagonism is compounded by the younger man’s challenge to win Fowler’s mistress, Phuong (who represents Vietnam itself). Fowler’s journey propels him towards ‘engagement’ as he draws closer to the carnage of war and his realisation that Pyle is unstoppable.

Film

_The Player_, Director: Robert Altman, 1992
A character in Robert Altman’s 1992 film _The Player_ asks, ‘What about truth? What about reality?’ The film cynically explores these notions, exposing the towering egos, avarice, duplicity, amorality and intrigue that is Hollywood moviemaking. Tim Robbins plays a studio executive who receives death threats from an anonymous screenwriter who had pitched a movie to him and been ignored. Robbins’ character is an amoral hero with ambiguous motives. Altman explores the Hollywood ‘dream’ machine through his characters’ predicaments. (Classification: M)

Play

Miller, Arthur, _Death of a Salesman_, First Copyright 1949, Methuen Drama Student Edition, 2010
Salesman Willy Loman’s tragic disintegration embodies the plight of all humans who strive to preserve their significance in a society which measures a man’s worth by his material and financial success. Trapped among the rising, impersonal Brooklyn tenements and within the cruelly elusive and brittle American Dream, Willy desperately seeks refuge in his dubious memories of better times. Meanwhile, Willy’s wife and two sons each struggle to support the crumbling man they love, despite recognising that Willy’s skewed perceptions are at odds with their own views of reality. Miller’s modern tragedy compels pathos whilst critiquing the fallibility of human perception.

Other Literature

Leunig, Michael, _The Lot: In Words_, Viking, Penguin, 2008 (A)
Many Victorians will be familiar with the unconventional views of reality that Michael Leunig presents in his cartoons, particularly through his use of the duck. In this collection of essays, Leunig effortlessly and poignantly makes connections between seemingly disparate things, treating the ills of the modern world with a good dose of the sublime. He counterbalances scathing social criticism with an undercurrent of inescapable hope; a vision of the world as enchanting and full of mystery. His essays contain elements of the parable, of memoir and soliloquy, and also of poetry. His ruminations touch on just about everything, but the single common thread is an unwavering propensity to tell the truth as he sees it.

Encountering Conflict

Novel

Greene, Graham, _The Quiet American_, Vintage (Random), 2004
Set in Vietnam, Graham Greene’s novel immerses readers in the private and political conflicts of his protagonist, Thomas Fowler, a cynical, aging British journalist. Amidst tension and violence, Fowler struggles to reconcile his credo of non-involvement with his conflicting moral, emotional and ideological views. When Fowler meets Alden Pyle, the ‘quiet American’, he encounters the dangerous innocence of this misguided but well-intentioned ‘soldier of Democracy’. Fowler’s antagonism is compounded by the younger man’s challenge to win Fowler’s mistress, Phuong (who represents Vietnam itself). Fowler’s journey propels him towards ‘engagement’ as he draws closer to the carnage of war and his realisation that Pyle is unstoppable.

Film

_Paradise Road_, Director: Bruce Beresford, 1997 (A)
Based on a true story, a group of women from diverse backgrounds, classes and nationalities become prisoners in a Japanese concentration camp following the fall of Singapore in World War II. Prisoners and guards confront each other in what is certainly not ‘paradise’. Faced with adversity, the women slowly understand that their survival is dependent on their individual and collective responses to the conflicts and horrors they encounter. The establishment of a vocal choir provides them with the impetus to find ways of working together to retain dignity and to find solace in the face of overwhelming challenges. (Classification: M15+)

Play

Brecht, Bertolt, _Life of Galileo_, Methuen Drama, 1986
Scientist and astronomer, Galileo Galilei, is faced with a crisis of conscience: either he must recant his heretical views of the universe or face torture and excommunication from
the Catholic Church. Galileo’s studies also bring him into conflict with those nearest and dearest to him – his daughter, his students and his supporters. Brecht’s text explores the ways in which one event can be the catalyst for a range of conflicts and how one man’s beliefs can place him in danger.

**Other Literature**


Najaf Mazari came to Australia as a refugee from Afghanistan. This charming biography conjures up his early life in the tiny northern town where he became entranced with rug-making. We follow his journey through war and its effects on his family, including the difficulties faced by Najaf to preserve his own life, finally making the perilous voyage to Australia. We observe Najaf’s experiences as an inmate of the Woomera Detention Centre, his methods of coping, his compassion for other detainees, and his unwavering devotion to the ideal of peace. Finally we see his heart-warming response to the kindesses of strangers as he creates a new life for himself in Melbourne.

**Exploring issues of identity and belonging**

**Novel**

**McCullers, Carson, The Member of the Wedding, Penguin Books, 2001**

Twelve-year-old Frankie Addams feels trapped in an endless summer. At odds with her growing body and the shifting world around her, she yearns for a sense of belonging. When her brother Jarvis announces his plans to marry, Frankie fantasises about the forthcoming wedding, and sees herself as the third member of the new family. Set against the backdrop of the Second World War, and in a town where racial and gender expectations dominate people’s interactions, *The Member of the Wedding* invites the reader to question the societal, cultural and familial expectations that both define and constrain us.

**Film**

**Skin, Director: Anthony Fabian, 2008**

The film opens with South African woman Sandra Laing finally enjoying the right to vote, in the contemporary Rainbow Nation. Sandra’s journey is traced in this biopic: from a child of Afrikaaner parents unaware of their mixed ancestry in apartheid South Africa, to an adult who appears to have resolved issues of identity and belonging despite horrendous obstacles. Her parents were shocked to have a ‘Coloured’ child, while Sandra was shunned in her own community. Classified ‘White’ after a successful legal appeal by her parents, Sandra subsequently sought re-classification. The audience glimpses the terrible price paid by individuals under the political system of apartheid. At the same time, we are confronted with significant questions about how identities, and a sense of belonging, are formed and sustained. (Classification: M)

**Play**


Canecutters, Roo and Barney return to suburban Melbourne for their seventeenth summer lay-off. Olive awaits them, excited but anxious that her conservative friend Pearl might replace Nancy who has recently married, abandoning her long-term liaison with serial-womaniser Barney. Six characters, spanning three generations, negotiate the effects of time on their perceptions of themselves and others. Only Olive’s mother, Emma, and Pearl, can see the crumbling heroes and the unsustainable façade Olive and her young neighbour, Bubba, refuse to confront. Ray Lawler’s examination of 1950s masculinity, Australian identity and loyalty captures the struggles of trying to build happiness into ordinary lives.

**Short Stories**

**Pung, Alice, Growing Up Asian in Australia, Black Inc, 2008 (A)**

This engaging collection addresses the migrant experience in Australia through personal stories, and its themes enable any reader to think about issues of identity and belonging. Representing a range of genres, the anthology spans several generations and explores diverse life experiences with honesty and humour. Fifty people write about issues such as dual identities, parental misunderstandings and the challenges of meeting the expectations of others while growing up in the ‘lucky’ country. From trying to hide scholastic abilities in ‘Exotic Rissoles’ to the self-explanatory ‘Five ways to disappoint your Vietnamese mother’, this collection will have wide appeal. Editor Alice Pung compiled the anthology to highlight the difficulties faced by generations of immigrants.
VCE Literature Text list 2013

The following texts proposed by the Literature Text Advisory Panel have been approved by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as suitable for study in Units 3 and 4 in 2013. Texts were selected in accordance with the following criteria and guidelines.

Criteria for text selection

Each text selected for the VCE Literature text list will:
• have literary merit and be worthy of close study
• be an excellent example of form and genre
• sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and providing challenging ideas
• be appropriate for both male and female students
• be appropriate for the age and development of students and in that context reflect current community standards and expectations.

The text list as a whole will:
• be suitable for a wide range of students, including second language students
• reflect the cultural diversity of the Victorian community
• include a balance of new and established works.

Guidelines for text selection

The text list for VCE Literature is determined within the following guidelines:
1. Texts in both List A and List B should be suitable for the areas of study and as the basis for achieving outcomes in the school-based coursework.
2. The texts in List B should be suitable as the basis for examination responses.
3. Forty texts should be available for List A.
4. Thirty texts should be available for List B.
5. The list must represent a range of forms, experiences and voices, as described in the study design.
6. Genres for List A must be represented in the following approximate numbers:
   - 10 Novels
   - 10 Performances
   - 8 Poetry
   - 6 Stories
   - 6 Other Literature

Genres for List B must be represented in the following approximate numbers:
   - 9 Novels
   - 9 Performances
   - 6 Poetry
   - 3 Stories
   - 3 Other Literature
7. One third of the texts should be Australian.
8. Approximately 75 per cent of the texts must be texts that would be expected to be familiar to most Literature teachers.
9. Contain no titles in common with those on the VCE English/EAL text lists.
10. Be reviewed annually, with approximately 25 per cent of the texts being changed. No text should appear for more than four consecutive years or fewer than two years.
11. Full bibliographic details must be supplied where necessary.

Text selection – advice to schools

Text selection advice is published on page 19 of the VCE Literature Study Design 2006-2014.

When selecting texts, teachers should ensure that students experience a range of literature from early to contemporary works, dealing with a diversity of cultural experiences and a range of points of view.

At least two texts should be Australian.
At least two texts should be selected from List A and two texts from List B.

Selections from the text lists should include:
• one novel
• one play, film or television mini-series
• between 10 and 15 poems
• collection of short stories, letters, memoirs, essays, tales, myths and short extracts from a variety of sources
• two further texts selected from novels, plays, collections of poetry, collections of short stories, biographies, autobiographies, collections of essays, letters or memoirs.

Note: While the VCAA considers all the texts on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that with some texts there may be sensitivities in relation to certain issues. In selecting texts for study teachers should make themselves aware of these issues prior to introducing the text to students.

The VCAA does not prescribe editions: any complete edition may be used. However, it should be noted that editions nominated for titles from List B are those from which the passages for the examination will be selected.

The bibliographic information is provided to assist teachers to obtain texts and is correct, as far as possible, at the time of publication. Publishing details may change from time to time and teachers should consult the VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET regularly for any amendments or alterations to the list.

In List A, the choice of poems for study is a teacher decision. Poems may be sourced from any edition of a poet’s works and editions in List A are not prescriptive. For List B, on the other hand, listed poems are prescriptive.

Key to codes

(A) This text meets the Australian requirement.
(#) Bracketed numbers indicate the number of years a text has appeared on the Literature text list: (1) for example, indicates that 2013 is the first year a text has appeared on the list.

List A

Novels
Calvino, Italo, If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller, Vintage, 1998 (4)
Dick, Philip K, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, Orion Publishing (Hachette), 1968 (1)
Dunmore, Helen, The Betrayal, Penguin, 2010 (1)
Flanagan, Richard, Wanting, Random House, 2009 (A) (2)
Ham, Rosalie, The Dressmaker, Duffy & Snellgrove, 2000 (A) (4)
Leigh, Julia, The Hunter, Penguin, 1999 (A) (3)
Parrett, Favel, Past the Shallows, Hachette, 2011 (A) (1)
Temple, Peter, The Broken Shore, Text Publishing, 2010 (A) (2)
Wharton, Edith, Ethan Frome, Penguin Classics, 2005 (4)
Winterson, Jeanette, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, Vintage, 2001 (3)

**Plays, film or television mini-series**

Brecht, Bertolt, The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Methuen Drama (Student Editions), 2007 (3)
Cawley, A C (ed.) Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays, Orion Publishing, 1993 (4)
Chinatown, (DVD) Director: Roman Polanski (Classification: M) 1974 (3)
Mary and Max, (DVD), Director: Adam Elliot (Classification: M) 2009 (A) (2)
Orton, Joe, Loot, Methuen Drama, 1967 (1)
Persepolis, (DVD) Director: Marjane Satrapi, (Classification: PG) 2007 (4)
Smith, Sue, (Film script) Bastard Boys, Currency Press, 2007 (A) (2)
The Piano, (DVD) Director: Jane Campion (Classification: M) (A) (1)
Wilde, Oscar, Lady Windermere’s Fan, Penguin Popular Classics, 1995 (3)

**Short stories**

Atwood, Margaret, Moral Disorder, Virago, 2007 (4)
Drew, Robert, The Rip, Penguin, 2008 (A) (2)
Gilmour, Charlotte Perkins, The Yellow Wallpaper & Other Stories, Oxford World’s Classics, 1995 (1)
Le. Nam, The Boat, Penguin Imprint, 2008 (A) (3)
Moore, Lorrie, Birds of America, Faber & Faber, Allen & Unwin, 2005 (4)
Murakami, Haruki, After the Quake, Vintage, Random House, 2003 (4)

**Other literature**

Bryson, Bill, The Life and Times of The Thunderbolt Kid, Black Swan (Random), 2007 (1)
Clendinnen, Inga, Agamemnon’s Kiss, Text Publishing, 2007 (A) (3)
De Botton, Alain, Status Anxiety, Penguin, 2005 (2)
Hyland, Adrian, Kinglake-350, Text Publishing, 2011 (A) (1)
Malouf, David, J2 Edmonstone Street, Vintage, Random House, 1999 (A) (4)
Walker, Brenda, Reading by Moonlight, Penguin, 2010 (A) (1)

**Poetry**

**Note:** No specific editions or poems are nominated for poets in List A as the choice of poems is a teacher decision.

Dickinson, Emily (4)
Duffy, Carol Ann, New Selected Poems, Macmillan, 2012 (2)
Holland-Batt, Sarah, Aria, University of Queensland Press, 2008 (A) (3)
Laskey, Michael, The Man Alone – New and Selected Poems, Smith/Doorstop books, 2008 (1)
Page, Geoff (ed.) 60 Classic Australian Poems, UNSW Press (A) (2)
Porter, Dorothy, The Bee Hut, Black Inc. 2009 (A) (1)
Tennyson, Alfred Lord (3)

**List B**

**Novels**

Austen, Jane, Persuasion, Penguin, 2003 (1)
Bronte, Charlotte, Jane Eyre, Penguin, 2006 (1)
Fowles, John, The French Lieutenant’s Woman, Vintage Classics, 2005 (2)
Leys, Simon, The Death of Napoleon, Black Inc, 2006 (A) (4)
Marquez, Gabriel Garcia, Love in the Time of Cholera, Penguin Modern Classics, 2007 (2)
McCarthy, Cormac, All the Pretty Horses, Pan Macmillan, 2010 (1)
McEwan, Ian, Atonement, Vintage, 2007 (4)
White, Patrick, The Aunt’s Story, Vintage Classics, 2008 (A) (3)
Woolf, Virginia, Mrs Dalloway, Penguin Modern Classics, 2000 (2)

**Plays**

Albee, Edward, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Vintage, 2001 (1)
Davis, Jack, No Sugar, Currency Press, 1998 (A) (4)
Friel, Brian, The Freedom of the City, in Brian Friel: Plays 1, Faber and Faber, 2005 (4)
Rayson, Hannie, Two Brothers, Currency Press, 2005 (A) (3)
Stoppard, Tom, Arcadia, Faber and Faber, 1993 (1)

**Short stories**

Carey, Peter, Collected Stories, Vintage, 2005 (A) (2)
Chekhov, Anton, The Lady With the Little Dog and Other Stories, 1896-1904, Penguin Classics, 2002 (4)

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Other literature
Capote, Truman, *In Cold Blood*, Penguin books, 2008 (2)
Hooper, Chloe, *The Tall Man*, Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Imprint, 2008 (A) (3)
Orwell, George, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2001 (1)
Pamuk, Orhan, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, Faber and Faber, 2006 (4)

Poetry

Note:
1. Each poem listed must be studied.
2. In the case of longer poems, extracts from the poem may be used in the examination.


From *Poetical Sketches* (1783)
   - Song (‘How sweet I roam’d from field to field’)

From *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793)
   - *Songs of Innocence* (1789)
      - The Lamb
      - The Little Black Boy
      - The Chimney Sweeper
      - Infant Joy
   - *Songs of Experience* (1793)
      - The Sick Rose
      - The Tyger
      - London
      - Infant Sorrow

From the *Pickering Manuscript* (1805)
   - Mary
   - Auguries of Innocence

From *The Four Zoas* (1797-1805)
   - What is the price of Experience? [35:11 – 36:13]

From *Milton* (1804; c. 1810-18)
   - And did those feet in ancient time (lines 1-16)

   - The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock
   - Portrait of a Lady
   - Preludes
   - Rhapsody on a Windy Night
   - Gerontion
   - Whispers of Immortality
   - The Waste Land (five parts)
   - The Hollow Men
   - Ash-Wednesday (six parts)
   - Journey of the Magi
   - Marina
   - Four Quartets (Burnt Norton)

Heaney, Seamus (trans.), *Beowulf*, Faber & Faber, 2005 (4)

Porter, Peter, *Max is Missing*, Picador, 2001 (A) (3)
   - Last Words
   - Streetside Poppies
   - In Paradisum
   - Max is Missing
   - The Sydney Spiders
   - Reinventing the Wheel
   - So Unimaginably Different and So Long Ago
   - The Lost Watch
   - Tasso’s Oak
   - The Philosophers’ Garden
   - Clichés as Clouds Above Calstock
   - Scrawled on Auden’s Napkin
   - Sir Oran Haut-Ton on Forest Conservation
   - Duetting With Dorothea
   - Ex Libris Senator Pococurante
   - Lichtenbergers

   - Storm Warnings
   - Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers
   - Ideal Landscape
   - Necessities of Life
   - The Trees
   - Jerusalem
   - A Valediction Forbidding Mourning
   - Diving into the Wreck
   - The Fact of a Doorframe
   - Twenty-One Love Poems, V - IX
   - North American Time
   - Dreamwood
   - Harpers Ferry
   - What Kind of Times Are These
   - Rusted Legacy

Rossetti, Christina, *Selected Poems*, Penguin, 2008 (1)
   - Song (‘When I am dead, my dearest’)
   - Remember
   - The World
   - Three Stages
   - Echo
   - My Dream
   - ‘The heart knoweth its own bitterness’
   - A Birthday
   - Winter: My Secret
   - Maude Clare
   - Up-Hill
   - L.E.L.
   - Goblin Market
   - Memory
   - Amor Mundi
Annotations of texts new to the VCE Literature List 2013

Annotations – Literature Lists A and B
These annotations of texts new to the Literature list in 2013 are provided to assist teachers with text selection. The comments are not intended to represent the only possible interpretation or a favoured reading of a text; nor do they represent the view of the VCAA. The list is arranged alphabetically by author or poet. Films are listed by title.

Novels

List A

In 2012 Earth is dying. Animals are rare and ownership of them is coveted, a practice which promotes the production of animal ‘replicants’. Androids also exist, but these have become a problem. Enter Reck Deckard who earns his living as a bounty hunter ‘retiring’ rogue androids on the run from enslavement. Deckard’s job was easy enough when the distinction between robot and human was preserved, quantifiable through ‘empathy tests’. But his quest reveals an increasingly blurred line. What if androids do dream? Dick’s writing is a genre fusion of hardboiled and sci-fi. Ridley Scott’s 1982 cult classic, Blade Runner, used the novel as a premise for the film.

Dunmore, Helen, The Betrayal, Penguin 2010 (1)
Set in Stalin’s USSR, this novel opens with a moral dilemma. The son of a Secret Police boss is admitted to hospital with an aggressive tumour in his leg. In a time when politics and fear invade every aspect of life, Andrei must decide whether to risk taking on the case and treating the boy, knowing that failure will have terrifying consequences. Exploring the conflict between personal and political accountability, The Betrayal is a fascinating glimpse into life under Stalin, giving an insight into the extraordinary pressures the regime placed on ordinary people.

Parrett, Favel, Past the Shallows, Hachette, 2011 (A) (1)
This lyrical and haunting debut novel explores the connections between landscape, memory and relationships. Three brothers are growing up on the remote southern coast of Tasmania. Their father, an abalone fisherman, carries a dark secret that has left him as unpredictable and dangerous as the coastal waters he fishes. The novel is an exploration of the ties that bind, both in families and in nature. Evocative, spare prose renders the simple beauty of ‘a cuttlefish bone, a nice bit of driftwood… a shark egg’ a striking contrast to the complexity of human emotion.

List B

Austen, Jane, Persuasion, Penguin, 2003 (1)
Anne Elliot at 27 is ‘thin and faded’. Seven years earlier, persuaded by a well-meaning friend, she gave up the one man she truly loved. Now neglected and ignored by a vain and narcissistic father and her two equally shallow sisters, Anne’s existence looks empty and bleak. Frederick Wentworth, the rejected suitor, has not forgiven Anne for breaking his heart. What happens when he returns? Different in many ways from Austen’s previous novels, this one is just as rich in cleverly handled social comment, but it is the moral debate about the nature of persuasion that makes it truly profound.

Brontë, Charlotte, Jane Eyre, Penguin, 2006 (1)
Brontë’s classic novel traces the life of its orphan heroine from her painful and unloved childhood at Gateshead and Lowood school, through early adulthood at Thornfield as governess to Mr Rochester’s ward, and with her cousins at Marsh End, to a fulfilling marriage at Ferndean. As each stage and place gives way to the next, Brontë explores a different aspect of what it is to belong, with the novel’s early sections a bitter critique of the treatment of children. A strong character, possessed of both determination and integrity, Jane eventually finds a place where she is both happy and loved.

McCarthy, Cormac, All the Pretty Horses, Pan Macmillan, 2010 (1)
This novel has about it all the epic quality of the great journey stories of mythology. It turns on the will of its protagonist, John Grady, to overcome and respond to the tests of love, betrayal and injustice. A late twentieth-century novel, it is set in the Mexican north and is unashamedly American in tone and voice. McCarthy’s prose is lyrical, even in the most stark of circumstances, and scenes describing the horse work undertaken by Grady and his partner are mesmerising in their evocation of that world. The dialogue is sparse and laconic, and the resolution of the drama, while violent, is more than plausible.

Plays, films or television mini-series

List A

Orton, Joe, Loot, Methuen Drama, 1993 (1)
Joe Orton’s 1960s play, involving a bank robbery and subsequent attempts to hide the evidence, has been described as a black farce which targets conventional morality, institutionalised religion, and the British legal system. Set in the house of the working class McLeavy family, the action revolves around the corpse of Mrs McLeavy, her coffin and the efforts of her son and his partners in crime to hide the cash and escape arrest. The dialogue is fast, witty and acerbic, deserving of the comparisons that have been made to Oscar Wilde.

The Piano, Written and Dir: Campion, Jane, (DVD) (1)
Ada, a young nineteenth-century Scottish woman who has not spoken since she was a child, is sent, along with her young daughter Flora, to a rugged and remote part of New Zealand to marry a man she has never met. Her piano is her prized possession, her ‘voice’ and an emotional outlet. In this story of passion, jealousy, obsession and love, two men vie for Ada’s affections, dividing Flora’s loyalties with tragic consequences. Cultures clash and flawed characters inhabit a harsh environment in this tense and moody film. The film is a study of the complexity and power of language.
List B


George and Martha, a worldly, jaded, older academic couple, invite campus newcomers Nick and Honey over for drinks. What ensues is an alcohol-fuelled unravelling of lives and marriages, as George and Martha take aim at each other and at their guests with a stinging precision that is both humorous and devastating. Albee’s play opened on Broadway in 1962, presenting a challenge to the white-picket-fence complacency of the American bourgeoisie.


Shakespeare’s account of the love between the eponymous protagonists is also a political portrayal of the point in history when Octavius became Caesar Augustus. Antony embodies the conflict in values between Rome and Egypt: the playful, flowing sensuality represented by Egypt and its Queen (‘in the East my pleasure lies’) and the duty and ethics of Rome (‘…all be done by th’rule’). The richness and hyperbole of Shakespeare’s language seductively evokes the passion between characters that would, originally, have been both played by male actors. *Antony and Cleopatra*, a play about the paradoxes of political power, invites the reader to consider also the monarchs of Shakespeare’s own time.

Stoppard, Tom, *Arcadia*, Faber and Faber, 1993 (1)

This sparklingly witty play interweaves two generations of the Coverly household, nearly two hundred years apart, at Sidley Park in Devonshire. Young Thomasina Coverly, a mathematical prodigy, clearly outstrips her tutor, Septimus Hodge. Around them, a web of social dalliances is played out against a backdrop of the transformation of the classical gardens into a picturesque wilderness. In the present, two rival researchers, Hannah Jarvis and Bernard Nightingale, try to interpret the events of the earlier period. This sophisticated play, with its complex ideas about mathematical theories, classicism and romanticism, free will and determinism and its poignant ending, is both challenging and accessible.

Short Stories

List A


The narrator in the title story, suffering a depressive illness after the birth of a child, is prescribed the ‘rest cure’ and confined to a room with distinctive yellow wallpaper. Alone with her troubled thoughts and no useful occupation, she hallucinates, imagining other women trapped beneath the wallpaper. Fusing the Gothic with prescient social criticism, Gilman’s feminism is vividly demonstrated throughout the collection. She explores the concept of ‘madness’, proposes alternate realities, challenges gendered identities and creatively explores issues of class and power.

List B


Orwell’s vivid memoir of his time living among the desperately poor and destitute is a moving tour of the underworld of society. Written when Orwell was a struggling writer in his twenties, it documents his ‘first contact with poverty’: sleeping in bug-infested hostels and doss houses of last resort, working as a dishwasher in Paris, surviving on scraps and cigarette butts, living alongside tramps, a star-gazing pavement artist and a starving Russian ex-army captain. Orwell gave a human face to the statistics of poverty and, in doing so, found his voice as a writer.

Other Literature

List A

Bryson, Bill, *The Life and Times of The Thunderbolt Kid*, *Black Swan*, *Random*, 2007 (1)

This memoir travels to the heart of 1950s Middle America, a ‘simpler’ time epitomised by *I Love Lucy*, innocent faith in material possessions, and a naïve, determined optimism blended with conservatism. Bryson takes readers through the cultural and geographic landscape of his childhood. The account is unified and filtered by his adopted persona of superhero, which parallels the national confidence in American invincibility. The past, as panoramically depicted here, is, indeed, ‘another country’. Bryson combines facts, quirky anecdotes and often hilarious narration to evoke this lost ‘wonderful world’.


Hyland, in this story about heroism and human decency, recreates the all-too-real events and aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires. For the most part through the eyes of local police officer Roger Wood, he reveals a community dealing with the tragedy of the day. At times fire itself becomes a character and at times Hyland uses imagination to tell the stories of those who faced the fires and did not survive. This powerful human story acts also as an indictment of those authorities who failed the people of the local area.

Walker, Brenda, *Reading by Moonlight*, *Penguin*, 2010 (A)

As she leaves her home for hospital, Brenda Walker thinks carefully about the book she will take with her – a book to sustain and console her in ‘an empty room … an almost unimaginable place’. With the subtitle ‘How books saved a life’, Walker dovetails her own story of breast cancer with the story of the books that she reads on her journey from diagnosis through to survival. The text serves as an introduction to authors such as Dickens, Nabokov, Beckett, Dante, Tolstoy and White. *Reading by Moonlight* is a poignant but ultimately uplifting memoir which carries a simple message: reading can begin a process of healing.

List B

Orwell, George, *I Love Lucy*, *Random*, 2007 (1)

Orwell’s vivid memoir of his time living among the desperately poor and destitute is a moving tour of the underworld of society. Written when Orwell was a struggling writer in his twenties, it documents his ‘first contact with poverty’: sleeping in bug-infested hostels and doss houses of last resort, working as a dishwasher in Paris, surviving on scraps and cigarette butts, living alongside tramps, a star-gazing pavement artist and a starving Russian ex-army captain. Orwell gave a human face to the statistics of poverty and, in doing so, found his voice as a writer.
Poetry

List A


[www.poetrybusiness.co.uk/](http://www.poetrybusiness.co.uk/)

Michael Laskey is of the UK’s leading contemporary poets. His poems speak of the intricacies of domestic relationships, family, friendship and the routines of the everyday. The poems are gently observational, the images homely and at times deceptively benign. Laskey’s characters, some of whom are semi-autobiographical, seldom reference literary or mythological allusions, academia or the esoteric; they are more concerned with navigating the concrete realities of love, work and the weekend. While the works are distinctly English in their setting, there is much that is recognisable, accessible and poignant for Australians.

Porter, Dorothy,* The Bee Hut*, Black Inc. 2009 (A) (1)

Porter completed this posthumously-published collection shortly before she died in 2008. She wrote five verse novels in all, along with stand-alone collections, libretti and two novels for children. Twice nominated for the Miles Franklin, she won awards for her edgy and passionate verse novel *The Monkey’s Mask*. ‘The most powerful presence / is absence’: *The Bee Hut* contains poems written in the last five years of her life. Sometimes elegiac, often humorous and frequently beautiful, the poems range across mythological and personal themes, conveying an intense awareness of the brevity and brutality, but ultimate richness, of life: ‘Something in me / despite everything / can’t believe my luck’ (‘View from 417’).

List B

Rossetti, Christina,* Selected Poems*, Penguin, 2008 (1)

Rossetti’s superbly crafted lyrical poems are full of riddles, paradoxes and elisions where self, nature, love and religion collide. If she had produced nothing else but *Goblin Market*, her fame would have been assured. This cryptic fable of sisterhood in daemonic fairyland, with its tripping metre and lush imagery, has generated a multiplicity of readings. With the death of Tennyson in 1892, Rossetti was touted as the next poet laureate. She wrote some of the most resonant poems of the Victorian age. Virginia Woolf said, in an address to her, ‘... some of the poems you wrote in your little back room will be found adhering in perfect symmetry when the Albert Memorial is dust and tinsel.’