

BLACK LIGHT

Ten Years of
First Nations Storytelling



Edited by Hannah Donnelly

B L A C K
L I G H T

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Warami Dharug Nurawa. Hello, good to see you on Dharug Country.

As is our way, we pay our deepest respects to elders past and present. We extend that respect to those who will fulfill those roles in the future and to the ancestors and people from all the lands, the eyes that read this, come from.

For those with budyari butbut/good heart and those with good intent, we prepare to welcome you to the unceded traditional lands, waters and skies of the sovereign Dharug yura/people. We honour our clans and acknowledge the relationships with our neighbouring First Nation people because connections are important. Our stories, like layers, interlaced together.

For Dharug yura, our lives, identities, belonging and being are intrinsically interconnected and woven into the fabric of this place, this ngurang. Our lore and practices, ceremonies, art, dance, flora, fauna, storying and dalang/language, are Dharug nura and Dharug nura is us. It is the embodiment of who we are. One entity, yet many. From the bulga to the garrigarrang, the mountains to the seas, this ngurang is a gift our people have lived in harmony with for tens of thousands of years. The creation of this ngurang is the bunarang, gumada yuu butbut, blood, spirit and heart of my Country and people.

In more traditional times, when we crossed into or reached another's nura, we would light a fire and wait to be approached to seek permission to be on or travel through their Country. If permission was granted, we would be welcomed to respectfully visit, walk on or pass through that nura. Hence where the modern Welcome to Country practice is derived from.

We have responsibilities and obligations to this beautiful nura we are privileged to call our home. The land, waters and skies of Dharug nura

have nurtured and provided for us since creation. We are her children. We are as a people from the oldest continual living culture on earth.

As sovereign Dharug custodians we invite you to be present on our nura and walk well and true. Never take more than you need and be generous and humble in returning kindness, care, respect and understanding to our wiyanga bamal, our mother earth, for she is suffering. We ask you to tread gently and honour the thousands of ancestors who still yanama budyari gumada Dharug nurawa: walk in good spirit on Dharug Country and learn from the footprints they left, for they are the old ones, the most ancient of knowledge holders, healers, warriors and nurturers.

Ngara Dharug nurawa... think, hear and listen on Dharug Country. She has so much to teach you, to tell and share with you. She will welcome you, if you listen.

Dharug yura yuu gumada ngallawan. Warami Dharug nurawa, burra, yuu badu.

Dharug people and spirits live and remain. Welcome onto Dharug Country, skies and waters.

*Didjurigur, ngubadi marri,
Thank you and much love,*

JULIE BUKARI WEBB

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**Ten Years of
First Nations Storytelling**

Edited by Hannah Donnelly

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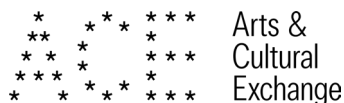
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FIRST THINGS FIRST

Blacklight is shining blackness over everything . . . some things are concealed unless you have the right frequencies to see them, but they are always there.

Sweatshop Literacy Movement was founded in 2012 as a self-determined grass roots organisation that would be devoted to empowering First Nations and culturally diverse communities through reading, writing and critical thinking. Since our inception, Sweatshop has produced a catalogue of anthologies featuring hundreds of writers and artists from schools, universities and writers' groups which celebrate literature, photography, visual art and graphic design produced entirely by artists from Aboriginal and non-English speaking backgrounds.

As we approached the ten-year anniversary of our movement, Sweatshop began to collate the data which charted our social impact on the Australian literary sector. This led to the discovery that across all of the publications we had ever published, 31% of the content was produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and arts practitioners. The content included poems, short stories, essays and illustrations which were originally developed by First Nations children as young as twelve years old during one-off creative writing workshops, and by emerging First Nations artists over several months during our ongoing writers' group masterclasses, residencies and mentorships. The pieces developed ranged from one sentence long to a few thousand words.

In 2020, award-winning Wiradjuri writer and editor, Hannah Donnelly, joined Sweatshop as a Creative Producer. Over a period of twelve months, Hannah read through every previous Sweatshop publication; compiling a complete document of all the First Nations stories we had published to date. The short stories, poems, essays, vignettes and artworks in this anthology feature pieces from past Sweatshop anthologies such as *The Big Black Thing: Chapter. 1* (2017), *The Big Black Thing: Chapter. 2* (2018), *Bent Not Broken* (2018), *This Little Red Thing* (2019), *Sweatshop Women: Volume One* (2019), *Sweatshop*

Women: Volume Two (2020) and *Racism: Stories on Fear, Hate & Bigotry* (2021). In addition to the content from these independently-produced publications, this anthology also features works that Sweatshop commissioned for anthologies in partnership with *Seizure Literary Journal*, such as *Stories of Sydney* (2014), and *The Lifted Brow Quarterly Magazine* (2017-2019).

To complement the works that Sweatshop has previously published, *Blacklight* also features eight original pieces from First Nations writers, as well as a *Welcome to Country*, which Hannah commissioned in 2020. The new artists appearing in *Blacklight* include:

Aunty Julie Bukari Webb: Dharug Knowledge Holder and cultural practitioner. Jasmine Seymour: Award-winning Dharug writer and member of the Dharug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation. Steven Lindsay Ross: Wemba Wemba, Muthi Muthi and Wiradjuri consultant, cultural producer and writer. Jazz Money: Award-winning Wiradjuri poet, filmmaker and educator. Ali Murphy-Oates: Wailwan woman living in Sydney; arts worker and emerging writer. Travis De Vries: Gamilaroi and Dharug podcaster and multi-disciplinary artist. Dr Jo Anne Rey: Dharug poet and Research Fellow with Macquarie University's Indigenous and Geography Departments. Yuin Mumbulla: Macquarie Fields High School student of Yaegl and Yuin ancestry. Maxine Edwards: Wiradjuri writer and community arts worker. In addition to these incredible writers, the powerful cover of *Blacklight* showcases the artwork of Barkindji, Wakka Wakka, Latjilatji and Biri Gubba visual artist, Emily Johnson.

Under Hannah Donnelly's leadership, the *Blacklight* initiative has resulted in a ground-breaking new anthology which illuminates the contemporary experiences of mob life and struggles, food, love and loss in Western Sydney and beyond. From future radical warriors, to the glory of El Jannah garlic sauce (if you know, you know), these stories cover the complex cultural boundaries and responsibilities that exist for First Nations people in the continued colonial occupation of the Country they live on and the Countries they are from. We hope these works speak to migrant and refugee communities as well, and trust that, together, we can grow in the dark.

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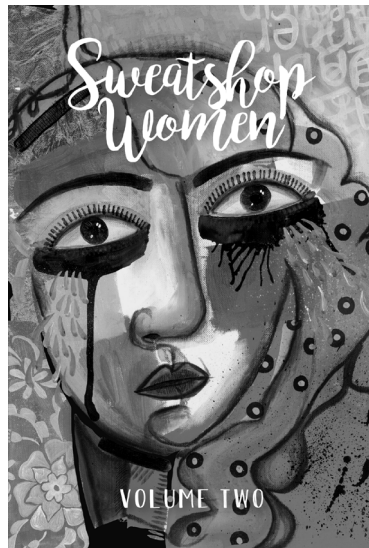
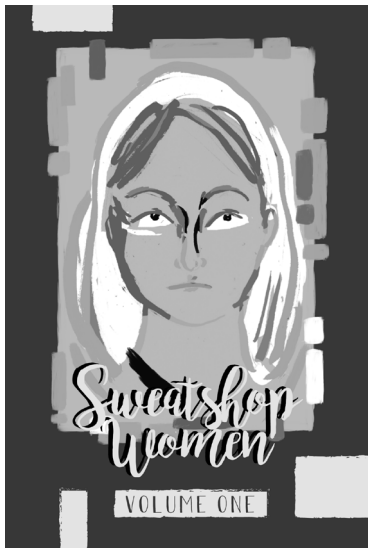
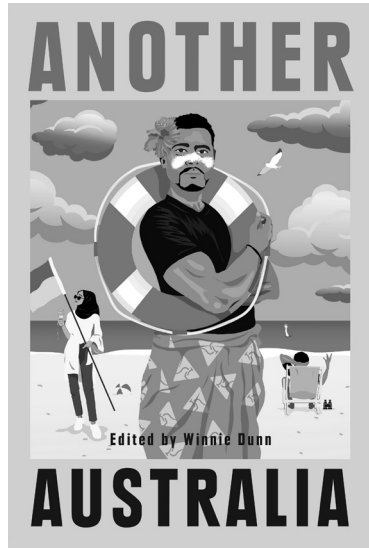
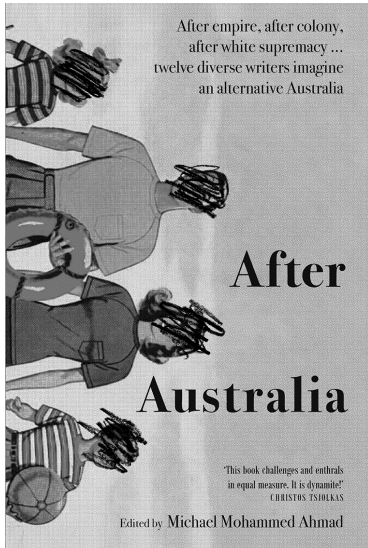
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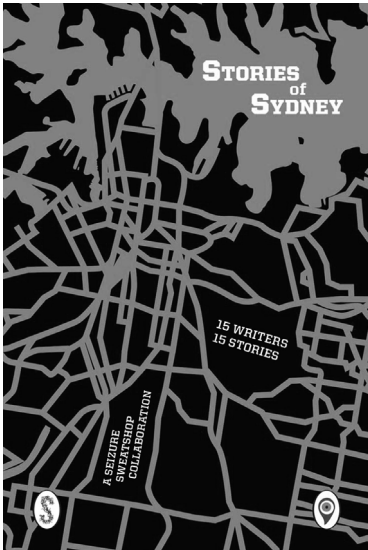
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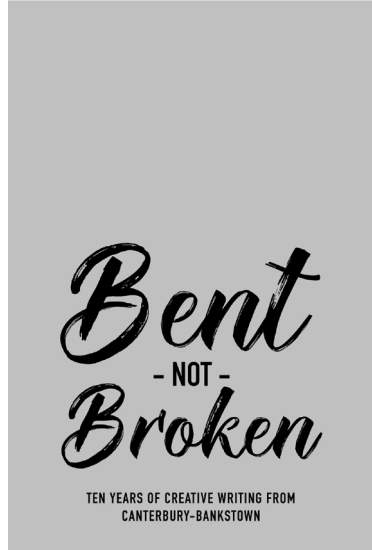
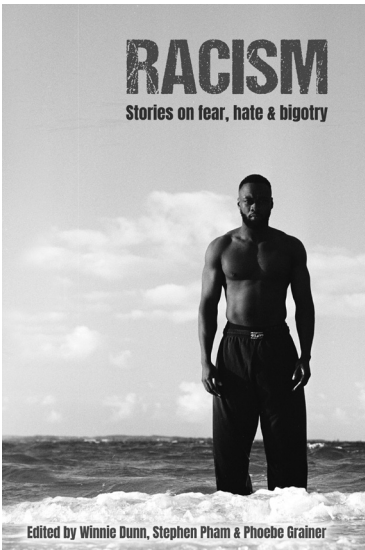
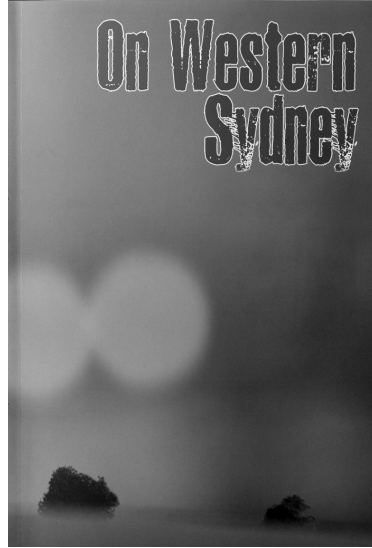
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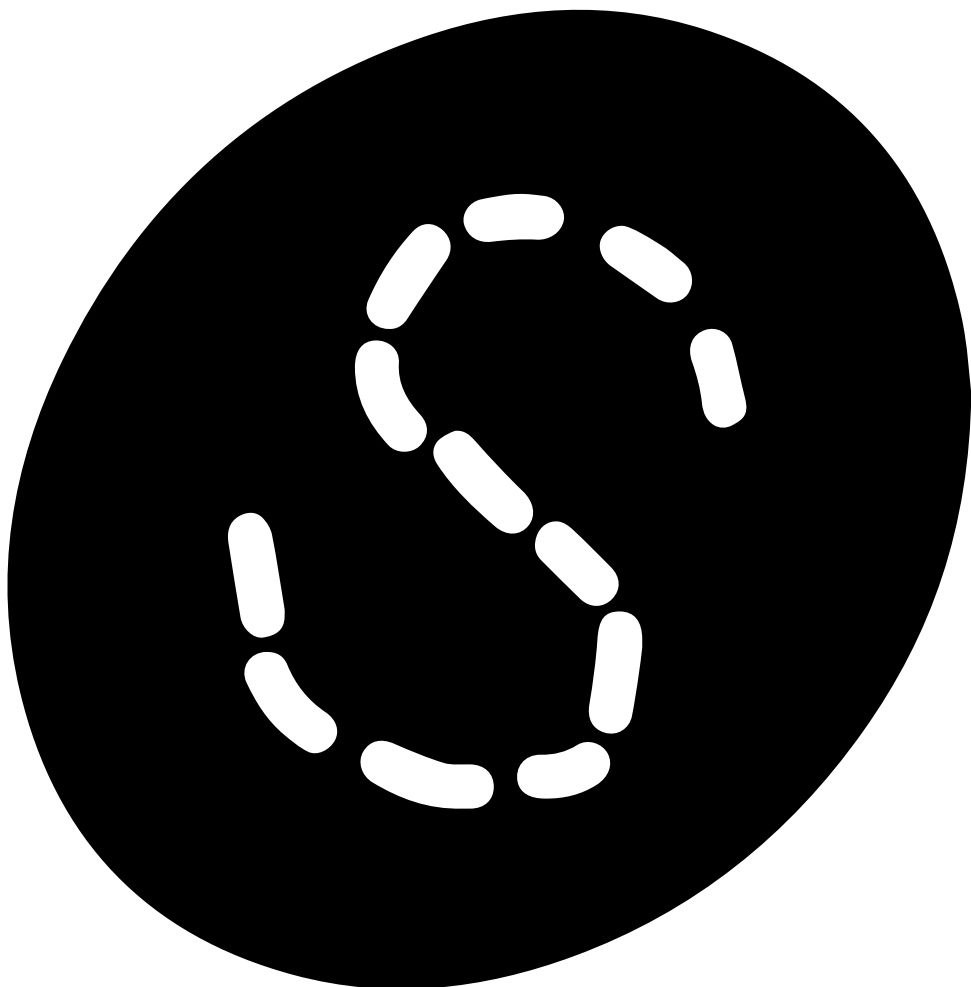
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LOVE LOSS HOPE HOME

Blacklight: Ten Years of First Nations Storytelling is a definitive anthology of writing produced entirely by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creatives from Western Sydney and beyond. This powerful collection showcases forty-eight short stories, vignettes, poems, essays and artworks that have been developed over the past ten years as part of the nationally renowned literacy movement known as Sweatshop.

Featuring

Julie Bukari Webb, Jasmine Seymour, Steven Lindsay Ross, Jazz Money, Ali Murphy-Oates, Travis De Vries, Dr Jo Anne Rey, Yuin Mumbulla, Maxine Edwards, Samantha Hogg, Tahlia Blacklock, Kiah Bolt, Mikayla Kumar, Kane Harrington, Kiarna Evans, Mark Streeeter, Courtney Miller, Hamani Tanginoa, Adina Aslett-Robertson, Shanae Hajsinger, Taylah Hansen, Tyreice Peachey, Brandon Gale, Marko Bogic, Trinity Wensley, Dominic Mills, Kasey Weightman, Trenton Fynn, Samantha Snedden, Teliah Edwards, Riley Kefford, Lachlan Holmes, Jamil Janif, Chelsea Randell, Colt Currell, Hayley Laws, Harrison Randell, Caitlyn Laws, Isaac Miller, Emma Hicks, Anneliese Joy, Phoebe Grainer, Afeni Tabuai-Salee and Riley Ingersole.