

# Nine Lives: Postwar Women Writers Making Their Mark - Susan Sheridan

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In the decades after World War II, the literary scene in Australia flourished: local writers garnered international renown and local publishers sought and produced more Australian books. The traditional view of this postwar period is of successful male writers, with women still confined to the domestic sphere. In *Nine Lives*, Susan Sheridan rewrites the pages of history to foreground the women writers who contributed equally to this literary renaissance. Sheridan traces the early careers of nine Australian women writers born between 1915 and 1925, who each achieved success between the mid 1940s and 1970s. Judith Wright and Thea Astley published quickly to resounding critical acclaim, while Gwen Harwood's frustration with chauvinistic literary editors prompted her pseudonymous poetry. Fiction writers Elizabeth Jolley, Amy Witting and Jessica Anderson remained unpublished until they were middle-aged; Rosemary Dobson, Dorothy Hewett and Dorothy Auchterlonie Green started strongly as poets in the 1940s, but either reduced their output or fell silent for the next twenty years. Sheridan considers why their careers developed differently from the careers of their male counterparts and how they balanced marriage, family and writing. This illuminating group biography offers a fresh perspective on mid-twentieth century Australian literature, and the women writers who helped to shape it.

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