

Miles Franklin Literary Award 2005 Shortlist

Authors' biographies

Sarah Armstrong

Sarah Armstrong has previously worked as a reporter on ABC Radio's AM, PM and The World Today. It was for a radio feature that Sarah won a Walkley Award. She was also a researcher and producer on Foreign Correspondent.

Seven years ago, Sarah left the ABC and moved to a very wet rainforest valley close to Byron Bay. She now teaches writing and yoga workshops in Byron Bay - her website is www.sarah-armstrong.com.

Steven Carroll

In the early 1990s Hilary McPhee recognised in Steven Carroll something very special. Carroll was a boy from the Melbourne suburbs who had played in rock bands during the 70s, been saved by theatre in the 80s, but had found his true calling in prose with his debut novel *Remember Me, Jimmy James* (1992). *The Age* Book of the Year gave it a special mention and called it 'distinguished'; *Overland* was 'moved, shocked ... devastated' by the book's unassuming power; and *The Canberra Times* was 'rewarded', noting its uniqueness. Here was a fresh, vibrant voice; a writer who, not unlike Tim Winton and Robert Drewe, unfailingly turned his eye inwards, showing us what it meant to be Australian.

Carroll expanded his range with his next two novels, *Momoko* (1994) and *The Love Song of Lucy McBride* (1998), but returned to the familiar - the Australian urban landscape - in 2001 with *The Art of the Engine Driver*, the first of three loosely connected stories set in the 50s and 60s. Shortlisted for the 2002 Miles Franklin Award, *The Art of the Engine Driver* was embraced by readers and lauded by critics. It was read on ABC radio; was a set text both for Melbourne University and the CAE summer program; and a film version is in pre-production to be produced by Mark Joffe with a screenplay by Don Watson.

Carroll's fifth novel, *The Gift of Speed*, cements his reputation as a writer of quiet intensity and distinction. It is a book which mesmerises with its gentle but urgent tale of a family's search for love, understanding and meaning at a time of great upheaval.

Steven Carroll lives in Melbourne with his partner and child.

Gail Jones

Gail Jones teaches in the Department of English, Communications and Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia. She is the author of two collections of short stories and one previous novel, *Black Mirror*, for which she has won numerous awards, including the Nita B. Kibble Award.

Andrew McGaham

Andrew McGahan was born in Dalby, Queensland, but has lived and worked mostly in Brisbane. His first novel *Praise*, published in 1992, was winner of The Australian/Vogel Literary Award. Since then his writing includes an award winning stage play (Bait) and the AFI award winning screenplay for the movie version of *Praise*. His second novel was the prequel *1988*, published in 1995, and his third novel *Last Drinks* was published in 2000. It was shortlisted for multiple awards, including The Age Book of the Year and The Courier Mail Book of the Year, and won a Ned Kelly award for crime writing.

Charlotte Wood

Charlotte was born in Cooma, NSW, in 1965. She trained as a journalist with a cadetship on the local newspaper and then at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Communication). She has worked as a freelance and part-time journalist and editor for many years, often in the health and medical press.

She started writing at university, and – with Vicki Hastrich (*Swimming with the Jellyfish*), Rebecca Hazel and Eileen Naseby – has been a member of a small weekly writing group for almost nine years. Her first novel *Pieces Of A Girl* was published in 1999.

For this work, Charlotte Wood was named one of the Sydney Morning Herald's Best Young Novelists in 2000. *Pieces Of A Girl*, was also shortlisted for the 2000 Dobbie Award and commended in the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards in the same year. *Pieces Of A Girl* also won the Jim Hamilton Award for an unpublished manuscript.

Charlotte has been closely supported over the years by Varuna – The Writers' House in the Blue Mountains of NSW; she now works occasionally with Varuna on various projects. In 2001 she was awarded an Australia Council for the Arts

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grant, which allowed her to travel overseas to research her novel *The Submerged Cathedral*. In 2002 she spent a month as a fellow at Arthur Boyd's Bundanon Artists Centre on the Shoalhaven River in NSW, where she continued work on the novel.

Over the years she has taught many students in her popular one-day writing classes for beginner writers at the University of Sydney's Centre for Continuing Education, and also works occasionally as a one-to-one mentor with new fiction writers.

This year Charlotte enrolled in a Doctor of Arts degree at the University of Sydney. She lives in Sydney with her husband Sean.