



Miles Franklin Literary Award 2006 Longlist

The Wing of Night
Brenda Walker
RRP \$29.95

In 1915 a troopship of Light Horsemen sails from Fremantle for the Great War. Two women farewell their men: Elizabeth, with her background of careless wealth, and Bonnie, who is marked by the anxieties of poverty. Neither can predict how the effects of the most brutal fighting at Gallipoli will devastate their lives in the long aftermath of the war.

The Wing of Night is a novel about the strength and failure of faith and memory, about returned soldiers who become exiles in their own country, about how people may become the very opposite of what they imagined themselves to be. **Brenda Walker** writes with a terrible grandeur of the grime and drudge of the battlefield, and of how neither men nor women can be consoled for the wreckage caused by a foreign war.

Brenda Walker is the author of the novels **Crush**, **One More River** and **Poe's Cat**. In **The Wing of Night**, her fourth novel, she brings her personal concern with Australians and war to the novel form. Her grandfather (who was brought up in an orphanage with his younger brothers, none of whom survived the Great War) fought at Gallipoli. He survived, only to be wounded in Pozieres, France, where a section of his face was shot away. Walker spent her childhood in her grandfather's house. Her early life was touched by the loss of men in the Great War and by stories of family members lost in World War II. While researching this novel, she discussed at length the immediate and later effects of warfare with Vietnam veterans.

The Wing of Night is the imaginative transformation of a deep concern with the disfigurement, visible and invisible, that war has brought to so many Australians over several generations, and with the way that the women who did not go to war coped with the loss of their men.

Brenda Walker was born in New South Wales and now lives in Perth, where she teaches at the University of Western Australia. She is also a critic, essayist and editor.