

## **Spring has Sprung**

### **Mairi Neil**

The first day of the rest of my life.

It sounds clichéd but today is a leap of faith, returning to teach creative writing after nearly four years of administration work at Melbourne University Student Union.

Farewell to travelling by train and tram into the city — a return journey of over two hours — welcome to a five-minute walk to class at Mordialloc Neighbourhood House.

A warm sea breeze greets me when I step into the garden. The sweet scent of red and white geraniums almost overpowers the redolence of the out-of-control rosemary bush, bedecked in tiny blue flowers humming with pollinating bees.

Crammed between the rosemary and geraniums, agapanthus still flower, and woody lavender craves tender loving care. The shrubs, thriving on neglect, ache for a trim. In-between their stems, dock leaves, dandelions, and a variety of grasses seeded by the wind and birds, sprout in profusion. Tiny violets peep through this jungle of greenery, determined to bloom. A valiant reminder that weeds need removal or multiple deaths by strangulation occur.

Spring!

The season of new beginnings — my garden suffers from being ignored during winter. The northerly breeze brings gardening chores along with the inevitable house spring-clean. The wattle's tiny soft cream balls promise colourful flowers; to its mast-like trunk, I pledge to tackle much-needed chores before the bridesmaid is transformed into blooming summer bride.

I bend to snip a budding camellia as inspiration for the writing class and the sticky evidence of an orb weaver spider's busy night brushes my hand. I hope his spidery mates stay outside and think of the effort to come of sweeping spider webs away from the cornices. There's fly wire screens to wash too, plus windows to clean...

Oh, bother!

Spring-cleaning can be put on hold just like the weeding. Writing a poem or short prose about spring is a much better idea. Several samples of blooms

Short piece of 394 words by Mairi Neil

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clipped from shrubs and trees dropped into a shoebox will inspire the students and me to pen some stream of consciousness writing.

With 'spring' in my step, I take the leap of faith my students will be happy to see me back.



Some of the class of 2008



*Toula, Bonny Amelia, Glenice,  
Margaret W, Susan and Tori*