

edited by  
Elizabeth Tan

**IN  
THIS  
DESERT,  
THERE  
WERE  
SEEDS**



and  
Jon Gresham

**IN**

**THIS**

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*In This Desert, There Were Seeds*

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MARGARET RIVER  
• PRESS •

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# Foreword

Sharon Flindell  
CEO, Writing WA

THE SEEDS OF this anthology were sown in 2010 when Australian writer Ken Spillman introduced Writing WA to colleagues at the National Book Development Council of Singapore. A relationship between our two organisations grew quickly and strongly around the emerging Asian Festival of Children's Content—an event that has since become the most significant annual festival of its kind in the region—and it was there that Writing WA's engagement with the literary community of Singapore began.

Our many years of supporting Western Australian children's content creators to participate in AFCC led Writing WA to initiate our first international publishing venture—*Near & Dear*; an anthology of stories for children from Singapore and Australia which we commissioned and published in 2014. *Near & Dear* then became the foundation resource of a two-year cultural exchange program between Singapore and Western Australia which saw several of the contributing authors working in schools to share their writing and cultures with young readers.

*In This Desert, There Were Seeds* is the latest outcome of our ongoing relationships with Singapore's writers and publishers. The result of a collaboration between Writing WA, Ethos Books (Singapore) and Margaret River Press

(Australia), it is a publication that was conceived over a lunch at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2017. The initial conversations that took place that day between Writing WA and the team at Ethos Books were fuelled by a shared enthusiasm to create a publication that would introduce readers to new and exciting literary voices emerging in both our countries. A few weeks later, back in Australia, Caroline Wood was equally receptive to the project and immediately committed Margaret River Press to partnering in its development and delivery.

So began a journey of nearly two years that has now arrived at the publication of this anthology.

The international co-publishing model that underpins *In This Desert, There Were Seeds* is one that Writing WA believes has great potential to evolve and be replicated by other publishers in Australia and elsewhere. We look forward to this anthology proving itself not only to be culturally significant but also commercially successful.

Writing WA is proud to have instigated this project and delighted to have been able to make a major financial investment in bringing it to fruition. We are grateful for Editors Elizabeth Tan and Jon Gresham, and indeed all involved in the delivery of this collection of stories that will bring our communities closer together. In supporting their publication, we hope we have sown seeds that will continue to grow and nurture similar publishing initiatives.



# Introduction

Elizabeth Tan and Jon Gresham

IN DIANA RAHIM'S "A Minor Kalahari", a story which gifted us with this anthology's title, a watermelon spontaneously grows in an old man's yard. This grey, barren town is an unlikely place for a watermelon to thrive; but, as one character informs another, watermelons have flourished in deserts before. The appearance of the watermelon is less a beacon of hope to Mr Tan, and more a reminder that there is still living to be done.

In November 2018, writers based in Singapore and Western Australia were invited to submit short stories to an anthology addressing challenges, hopes and joy for the future. In Western Australia, Margaret River Press curated a selection of ten writers—a mixture of emerging and established voices in the literary community—who were prompted by the following questions: "What are our greatest fears? Isolation from this arid land mass or the irony of dense urban space? Do we sow for a common hope, or rake alone? Shall those who come after us inherit these geopolitical, social and economic anxieties?" In Singapore, Ethos Books sent out an open call for submissions to the anthology under the working title of "Our Imagined Futures". We received over ninety submissions engaging with the brief for the open call, which stated:

So what about tomorrow? What are our fears, and what do we think is changing us forever? We seem to be living in an era of widespread anxiety and despair with people becoming increasingly alienated and frustrated with political institutions, social and economic structures. Our sense of identity and community is changing, leading to a greater sense of mistrust, disillusionment, loneliness and isolation. Recent global reports on climate change have raised the prospect of the collapse of “civilisation” and the end of human life as we know it. In order to confront our prevailing fears and concerns, where will we find the courage to face our challenges, to see and do things differently, and build hope and joy for the future?

The divergent approaches of these two publishers and their intersecting questions about loneliness, fear, and legacy come to fruition in these final twenty stories. *In This Desert, There Were Seeds* aims to showcase evocative, fresh, quality fiction from Singapore and Western Australia that will help readers find and connect with new literary voices and stories beyond their own communities. The characters in this intimate collection find themselves stranded in deserts both literal and metaphorical, in which there is still, as always, living to be done.

Though the residents in David Whish-Wilson’s “Vigilance Security” all dwell within lonely boxes—their one-person apartments and a bank of surveillance screens—they rustle with their own private dramas, deserving of dignity. In Chen Cuifen’s “Reunion Dinner”, a daughter chooses to spend Lunar New Year with her sister in California instead of her mother in Singapore; although she is not homesick, she concedes, “I want there to be a place I go back to.” In

Aishah Alhadad's "Datuk's Home" and Heather Teo's "Gently Burns the Crescent Moon", the isolation of the protagonists heightens their sensitivity to the passing of time, as others conspire to uproot their "place [they] go back to", and as memories slip away. In these stories, home is a place of yearning, despite it being the location of a difficult lived experience.

Rashida Murphy, in "Death Lilies", aptly characterises her assortment of migrant characters as "outsiders trying to become insiders", though as it transpires, in this story and others in the anthology, "insiderness" is not permanent or guaranteed. The protagonists of Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes's "Maqdala 1868/London 2018" and Jay Anderson's "Flies" understand this too well: all it takes is a thoughtless remark, a sidelong look, to remind you that your belonging is tenuous, conditional on being agreeable and cooperative, honey rather than vinegar. Meanwhile, in Rajkumar Thiagaras's "The White Lotus: Sinking to the Bottom", the protagonist gazes at her reflection in the river Kaveri, an outsider realising she has no possibility of becoming an insider because she is trapped in a patriarchal society.

In this anthology's uncanny visions of the future, characters continue to grapple for peace and belonging in a hostile world. Arin Alycia Fong's "Walking on Water" provides a recipe for making *sugee* cake as a means of salvation as the seas rise. Marylyn Tan's "The Blue Leopard" critiques consumer culture and technology with a tale of alienation and urban frustration, in which sexual expression bursts out of community constraints to escape. There will be no escape in Leslie Thiele's "The Slaughterman", which beguiles the reader with a unique character study of a worker of tomorrow that morphs into a macabre, dystopian fiction.

This is, as well, an anthology about grief, in all its painful permutations. Despite the insistence of the ex-lovers in Jinny Koh's "Contentment" and Alicia Tuckerman's "Glass" that their histories—their oldest and finest selves—no longer matter, the present nonetheless nurses a long and wounded memory of the past. The narrator of Rachele Rechichi's "Dark Mulberry" remains embedded in the present tense, a constant "now", illustrating how trauma capsizes time; meanwhile, for Chipso of Tinashe Jakwa's "Purple Flowers", guilt and regret render time as circular. The endless car ride to the airport in Laurie Steed's "Sometimes Close, Sometimes Distant" creaks with old hurts, as Jen and Sophie confront (and don't confront) their brittle friendship. Choo Ruizhi's titular "Aviatrix" and Sabrina Dudgeon-Swift's heartbroken Asha in "The Wave" both commune with bodies of water, who reassure them that resilience and persistence are their birthrights; that although time cannot promise to erase their trials all together, it promises to carry them forward. In Cyril Wong's "Harihara", the present embraces the past, and transcendence is achieved to the metamorphosing syllables of Paula Abdul's "Rush, Rush".

Many hands and minds have tended *In This Desert, There Were Seeds*, ensuring that no one has had to rake alone. We the editors would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Sharon Flindell of Writing WA for conceiving this project; to Caroline Wood, Camha Pham, and Jay Anderson from Margaret River Press for your wisdom and warm correspondence, for smoothing our paths, and for being a delight to work with; to Melanie Persson and others at the Centre For Stories for your insights and keen eyes; to Kum Suning from Ethos Books for your guidance and encouragement, and to Bettina Hu, Khalisah Wan and

Teo Xiao Ting for your meticulous work during the whole process; to Marie Toh for your exquisitely beautiful cover design. And lastly, thank you to the twenty contributing authors to this anthology for your bold imaginations, for your tenderness and humour, and for entrusting your stories to us.



**STORIES**

# A Minor Kalahari

Diana Rahim

IT ALL STARTED when a big, beautiful watermelon appeared overnight in a town that was not particularly big, nor particularly beautiful.

The greyness had hit the town first, rendering it barren before claiming the rest of the island. Grass was reduced to a brittle shade of brown. Trees stood listlessly on the verge of banal deaths. The elderly in the estate began to die one by one, their bodies and brains regressing from lack of stimulation before ceasing altogether. It was as if a fog had descended, choking the air and all life. There was no obvious violence. Everything natural simply faded or died.

So imagine that in such a town, a big, vibrant watermelon erupted into existence. It grew overnight on a grass patch just in front of Mr Tan's house.

It was like this: sixty-three-year-old Mr Tan woke up, sat on his bed, and as sleep ebbed away, he registered an anomaly at the periphery of his vision. A burst of colour. He looked out his open window and saw it. A big, green orb in a field of infertile brownness. For some reason the sight filled him immediately with fear instead of hope.

One must understand that the presence of an anomaly could only be understood by Mr Tan as the arrival of more Bad Things.

It was, after all, the death of five great trees in the neighbourhood eight years ago that had signalled the beginning of the greyness. Then birds began to fall. The flowers stopped blooming. The rain forgot itself, mutely showering the island for days at a time. Street cats stopped fighting to climb the dead trees and sleep on their branches, without a care even when the rain fell upon them. They slept, dreaming human dreams. Blue sky. Grass green again. Birds strutting about, clueless but alive.

Not a single thing had grown in the neighbourhood, in the whole island, for the past eight years. All that was left were rectangular beds of dirt and sand where grass, bushes, flowers, and trees used to be. So one must understand why, on that morning, Mr Tan could only read the presence of the watermelon as an omen.

He was prone to dreaming. That was his flaw. He used to think that if you dreamt hard enough, repeated an image or desire with enough intensity, things could be willed into existence. He used to dream of wealth and grandchildren. He dreamt of a luxurious retirement. Of massaging his wife's feet in the morning on another of their many holidays. None of these things came to happen. So when he saw the watermelon, he thought that perhaps he had not killed that part of his dreaming self enough. He thought that perhaps there was a part of him that was dreaming still. Dreaming of a return to an earlier time; a time when things still grew.

But when he walked out his bedroom, across the hallway, and opened the door, he saw that the watermelon was indeed there. Its unmistakable reality was almost violent in its presence. He slotted his feet into his slippers and walked towards it.



When he squatted in front of the watermelon, his eyes were alarmed at the shock of colour. He had forgotten what it felt like when his eyes registered colour, bright and alive. How it was enough to change the way everything looked. He stared, remembering all those years ago when he read that green was a healing colour and calming for the eyes. He observed the wavering dark green lines stretching themselves end to end on a lighter green body. Not knowing what they were called, his wife once called them stretchmarks.

“Is it yours?” His neighbour, Ms Sharifah, appeared behind him without him noticing. How long had he been squatting in front of the watermelon, waiting for his eyes to adjust?

“No.”

“Then whose?”

“I don’t know, it was here when I looked out the window this morning.”

At that moment, Mr Tan realised that it was possible to reach out and touch it. This scared him. To touch something so alien to their current environment felt to him an adventurous act, as if he were a child again, new to the world.

He was about to touch it, but Ms Sharifah’s five-year-old burst onto the grass patch and grabbed at the watermelon.

“Raiyan!” Ms Sharifah whispered sharply.

Raiyan kept grabbing and ignored his mother, fuelled by the energy of a child seeing something new. As he lifted the watermelon up, they saw that it was rooted to the ground. It had not been dropped or left there. It was growing in the earth.

Ms Sharifah lost any annoyance with her son and squatted next to Mr Tan, leaving her son shrieking in excitement, assailing her with questions.

“It really grew here? When?” She pulled her son towards her.

“What is this, Mama? Is it sick?” Raiyan was touching it, taking pleasure in hearing the sounds it made when he rapped on its side. He lifted its roots with his little fingers, querying even the ants.

“What is this, Mis-ter Ant?”

“This is a watermelon, sayang, and it is not sick. This is the colour green,” Sharifah replied.

\*

The more the watermelon grew, the more something in the neighbourhood changed. It started in the people who walked past it every day. Each day was another day they realised such a thing was possible. Each day there bubbled within them a desire that the watermelon would continue to exist. They walked past it even with anxiety, fearing as they approached that it might have died or disappeared just like so many other things in the neighbourhood.

A whole month passed until one day, a laminated note was stuck on the watermelon. On it read the declaration:

This fruit was not planted by the town council. If it belongs to a resident, we ask that it be removed. If no action is taken, the council will deem it appropriate to remove it.

The next week, a young man appeared at Mr Tan’s doorstep. He wore a white shirt, black pants, shiny important-looking shoes and uncomplicated rectangular steel-frame glasses. He seemed to be the same age as Mr Tan’s son, maybe younger.

“Hello sir, are you Mr Tan Yao Guang?”

“Yes. Yau Kwang.”

“We received notice that there’s a watermelon growing in the grass patch in front of your home. Did you plant it there?”

“No, I didn’t. You call that a grass patch? Where got grass?”

“Do you know who planted the watermelon there?”

“It just appeared overnight. I wish I could plant something else.”

“Do you realise it’s illegal?”

“You want to take it away?”

“I didn’t say anything about taking it away, I’m just asking who planted it there.”

“When was the last time you saw a watermelon?”

The young man did not reply to Mr Tan’s question. Mr Tan had the brief feeling as if the young man’s soul had cracked through the skin of his face and shown a little tenderness in his eyes. But the part of him that made him choose his job ultimately reigned over his soul and locked it back in submission. His face returned to a professional expression and presented Mr Tan an unsettling smile. Before leaving, he parted with what seemed like genuine warmth.

“Thank you, Mr Tan, if you have any updates about the watermelon, please contact the town council office and ask to speak to me. My name is Darren Gan.”

What was most absurd was not the threat of removing the watermelon. It was not even the suggestion that Mr Tan would cooperate with the Town Council. The most absurd thing was the fact that Darren Gan had not looked at the watermelon at all during his visit. Not once.

Mr Tan believed that it was a deeply sad flaw to refuse to see a miracle.

\*

## ABOUT THE EDITORS

**Elizabeth Tan** was born in Perth to Singaporean parents. She completed her PhD in Creative Writing at Curtin University, where she now works as a sessional tutor. Her debut novel, *Rubik*, has been published in Australia (Brio, 2017), North America (The Unnamed Press, 2018), and the United Kingdom (Wundor Editions, 2018). More recently, her work has appeared in *Overland*, *Stories of Perth*, *Catapult*, *Lenny Letter*, and *Best Summer Stories*.

**Jon Gresham** was born in England, grew up in Australia and has lived in Singapore and Thailand for the last 19 years. Jon's debut collection of short stories, *We Rose Up Slowly*, was published by Math Paper Press in 2015. Jon is also a co-founder of the Singaporean literary community, Sing Lit Station. He leads the Writing the City Creative Writing Workshops at Toa Payoh Library each month. His writing has appeared in various anthologies and literary journals including *Best New Singaporean Short Stories Vol. 3* and *In Transit: An Anthology from Singapore on Airports and Air Travel*. He is currently working on a novel about an adopted, transnational, Eurasian in Southeast Asia.

## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Aishah Alhadad** is currently a Master's student with the Southeast Asian Studies Department in the National University of Singapore (NUS). But before academic essays, Aishah has been writing short stories since she was nine. And this is the first time she gets to share her fiction with everyone! If she's not reading or writing, she's bingeing on another show on Netflix, probably with a slice of cake.

**Alicia Tuckerman** is a driving force for young LGBT voices within Australia. Raised in rural NSW before she left home at the age of sixteen, she accepted a position to study at the Hunter School of Performing Arts. Described as having an overactive imagination as a child, she recalls writing stories her entire life. Alicia attributes surviving her teenage years to the comfort, release and escape writing offered and she hopes to inspire the next generation of readers and writers to embrace their true passions. Alicia's debut novel *If I Tell You*, explores the joys, triumphs and cruelties of modern-day adolescence.

**Arin Alycia Fong** is a graduate student of Creative Writing at Nanyang Technological University. Her short fiction has appeared in an antirealist fiction anthology *this is how you walk on the moon* and has been longlisted for the inaugural First Pages Prize 2018 organised by Stockholm Writers Festival. Her poetry and critical work can be found on *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore* and *Jacket2*.

**Chen Cuifen** was born and raised in Singapore where she now lives and works, having spent many years abroad in

the UK and Australia. She was the first-prize winner of the Troubadour International Poetry Prize 2018, and her creative non-fiction is forthcoming in the journal *Fourth Genre*. Cuifen is currently pursuing an MA in Creative Writing at LASALLE College of the Arts. She is interested in liminal spaces, identity, belonging, and most of all fantastic things.

**Cyril Wong** is a poet and fictionist from Singapore.

**David Whish-Wilson** is the author of five crime novels and three non-fiction books. He writes essays, reviews, text for public artworks and award-winning short fiction. His most recent novel is *The Coves*, out now with Fremantle Press. David lives in Fremantle and coordinates the creative writing program at Curtin University.

**Diana Rahim** currently serves as the editor of *Beyond The Hijab*, an online platform sharing stories of Singaporean Muslim women. She enjoys writing essays and book reviews when she has the time and enjoys writing fiction and poetry when she should be writing her thesis. Her recent essays have been anthologised in *Growing Up Perempuan* (2018) and *Budi Kritik* (2018). She has three cats.

**Heather Teo** is a Fine Art and History of Art graduate from Goldsmiths College, London. She is interested in psychologies of home and interior spaces, and explores these themes through evocative objects, relics of existences, and moments of intimacy in everyday life. Heather is primarily a photographer, and enjoys exploring through her writing as well.

**Jay Anderson** is a writer and editor with a background in cultural studies. He managed and contributed to the Centre for Stories LGBT storytelling project *Bright Lights, No City*, which was published as a collection by Margaret River Press. He is currently researching Queer Writing at Curtin University.

**Jinny Koh** is the author of *The Gods Will Hear Us Eventually* (Ethos Books, 2018). Her stories and essays have appeared in *Pembroke Magazine*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Kyoto Journal*, *Columbia Journal*, and *Litro*, among others. She graduated Phi Kappa Phi with a Master of Professional Writing from the University of Southern California, where she was the Fiction Editor for *The Southern California Review*. She is currently a freelance editor and writer based in Singapore.

**Laurie Steed** is the Patricia Hackett Prize-winning author of *You Belong Here*, published in March 2018. His fiction has been broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and has been published in *Best Australian Stories*, *Award Winning Australian Writing*, *The Age*, *Meanjin*, *Westerly*, *Island*, and elsewhere. He is a recipient of fellowships from The University of Iowa, The Baltic Writing Residency, The Elizabeth Kostova Foundation, The Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation and The Fellowship of Writers (Western Australia). He lives in Perth, Western Australia, with his wife and two sons.

**Leslie Thiele** is a writer based in the South West of Western Australia. Her short fiction centres around her characters' reactions to the world they live in and social change. A keen student of human nature in all its manifestations, Leslie drops people into imagined situations and environments and waits

to see what they will do. Recently completing her Bachelor of Arts in creative writing and literature at Edith Cowan University's regional campus in Bunbury has further refined her writing and led to her gaining recognition for pieces of her work in various competitions, events and spoken performances.

**Marylyn Tan** is a queer, female, linguistics graduate, poet, and artist, who has been performing spoken word since 2014. She is invested in building community, emancipating the marginalised, and the alienated, endangered body. Her first volume of poetry, *GAZE BACK*, is published by Ethos Books and is the lesbo Singaporean trans-genre witch grimoire you never knew you needed. Marylyn has been published in various anthologies, including *A Luxury We Must Afford*, *Inheritance*, and *ASINGBOL Anthology*. She writes for your bewilderment.

**Rachelle Rechichi** was first published in 2014 after winning the Margaret River Press South West Writer's Prize. Rachelle's further published works, including short stories and a poem, reinforce her interest in the body as an interface between the self and the world. The bodies that Rachelle inhabits are forced into strange situations and small spaces. They look out to the world with fresh eyes; and they are watched—or are they? Rachelle enjoys the escape that writing provides and cherishes the times when her psychology studies permit it.

**Rajkumar Thiagaras** is an avid reader and thespian. He is currently a final year undergraduate at Nanyang Technological University, majoring in English Literature and pursuing a



minor in Theatre and Performance. His passion for writing was first ignited in 2007, when he won the second prize in the inaugural writing competition organised by Renaissance Publishing and got his work published in an anthology entitled *Romance Volume 1*. Raj hopes to explore stories about his cultural heritage, with a special focus on issues concerning the Indian diaspora in Singapore and the surrounding region.

**Rashida Murphy** is the author of the novel *The Historian's Daughter* (UWA Publishing), which was shortlisted in the Dundee International Book Prize in 2016. Rashida has published short fiction and poetry in various international journals and anthologies, including *Westerly*, *Open Road Review* and *Veils Halos and Shackles*. She was Writer-In-Residence at the Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers' Centre in 2017 and is currently an Adjunct at Edith Cowan University in Perth. Her essays, poems and stories are published and forthcoming in *Landscapes Journal*, *Red Hen Anthology*, *Of Indian Origin*, *The Newcastle Short Story Anthology* and *Feminine Divine*.

**Choo Ruizhi** believes in magic. He believes there is still plenty of it stored in the myriad corners of Singapore. As a researcher, tutor, and student of Singapore's pasts, he believes in the immense potential of stories and histories to entrap, but also empower. Presently, he runs @singapore\_stories, an Instagram project offering alternative insights into Singapore's pasts, presents and futures. He lives in a quiet HDB neighbourhood named after conquerors from a faraway land, under the shade of a Central American tree. His grandmothers like to tell him stories he can't find in textbooks.

**Sabrina Dudgeon-Swift** is a descendant from the Bardi people from north of Broome and the Giga people in the East Kimberley. Sabrina grew up in Darwin but now lives in Perth and works for the School of Indigenous Studies at The University of Western Australia. Sabrina enjoys writing and telling stories to all ages and is inspired by her heritage and children when writing.

**Tinashe Jakwa** is a PhD Candidate in Political Science and International Relations at the University of Western Australia. She is a political and security risk analyst who has written extensively on geopolitical developments on the African continent. She has appeared on various TV and radio platforms, including the ABC News, Channel 10's *The Project*, CNN, and Radio National Australia, providing commentary on African political developments. Tinashe is also a published author of short stories. Her writing has appeared in the anthology *Ways of Being Here*, published by Margaret River Press. She has also spoken at the Sydney Writers' Festival.

**Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes** is a writer, researcher and poet from the historic town of Lalibela in Ethiopia. His poetry is published in የተራራች ጩኸት (The Cry of Mountains), in which he uses his native language of Amharic to reflect on Ethiopia's history of loss and resilience. His creative writings have appeared in *Ways of Being Here* (Margaret River Press), *Born Free Created Poor* (Westerly), and in the anthology *Stories of Perth* (Brio Books). Yirga's research at Curtin University focuses on the critical study of development, education and law, and the importance of lived experience and epistemic diversity for decolonial and sustainable futures. He developed the theory 'native colonialism' to examine the process

whereby a country colonises itself with Western institutions and ideals that do not serve the interest of its people. He researches African experiences and Ethiopian traditions, and writes creatively on belonging and diasporic lives.

## ABOUT ETHOS BOOKS

Giving voice to emerging and exciting writers from diverse backgrounds, we help foster an environment in which literature and the arts not only survive, but thrive. In short, we nurture the growing literary community in Singapore and throughout the region.

That's why our authors and their ideas come first. By taking a collaborative approach to publishing, we bring each author's voice and vision to fruition. We are always open to new ideas: different ways of working and fresh ways of delivering the unparalleled satisfaction only a good book can bring.

Established in 1997, Ethos Books, an imprint of Pagesetters Services Pte Ltd, aims to create books that capture the spirit of a people and reflect the ethos of our changing times.

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## **ABOUT MARGARET RIVER PRESS**

Margaret River Press operates both in Margaret River and at the Centre for Stories in Perth, Western Australia. Its small team of staff, editorial members and ever growing interns, love the feeling that comes from publishing not in pursuit of profit, but in a sense of curiosity about people, places, and the stories they hold.

Margaret River Press is strongly committed to nurturing and supporting writers at all stages of their career.

More than anything, Margaret River Press offers an engaging, approachable alternative to mass publication, selecting those titles that speak to us, and bringing them to you, the reader.

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MARGARET RIVER  
• P R E S S •

Endangered tigers connecting telepathically through time-travel; a guard's ethical dilemma at a history museum; a slaughterhouse worker's memories of his dead wife; a monochrome town upended by a wild watermelon...

***In This Desert, There Were Seeds*** is an intimate collection of past and future dreams, featuring exciting new and established literary voices from Western Australia and Singapore. From our shifting sense of community and identity, to our frustrations with existing political, social and economic structures—this anthology transcends boundaries and captures the persistence of ordinary lives in deserts literal and metaphorical.



Edited by Elizabeth Tan and Jon Gresham,  
and featuring writers:

Aishah Alhadad · Alicia Tuckerman · Arin Alycia Fong  
Chen Cuifen · Cyril Wong · David Wish-Wilson  
Diana Rahim · Heather Teo · Jay Anderson  
Jinny Koh · Laurie Steed · Leslie Thiele · Marylyn Tan  
Rachelle Rechichi · Rajkumar Thiagaras  
Rashida Murphy · Choo Ruizhi · Sabrina Dudgeon-Swift  
Tinashe Jakwa · Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes



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