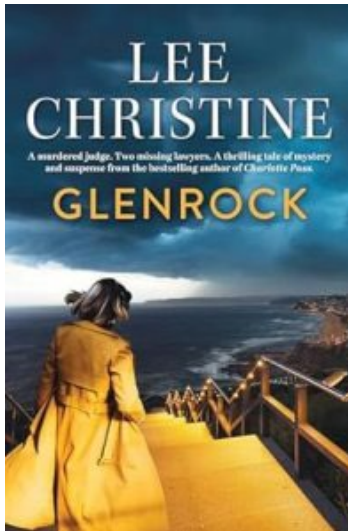


Book Reviews

- ***Glenrock* / Lee Christine Fiction 2024**
- ***Galah : Stories of life outside the city : people, places, community*
Edited by Annabelle Hickson Non Fiction 2024**

Book Review

***Glenrock* / Lee Christine Fiction 2024**



After Justice Maurice Tempest dies violently in the Glenrock State Conservation Area in Newcastle, local detective Senior Sergeant Callan O'Connor is urgently called to the scene. Days later a second body is found in the same location, turning what had looked like a revenge killing into so much more. Former political journalist Angela Avery has been spending a lot of time at the Hunter Valley prison interviewing a soon-to-be-released forger, and when O'Connor's investigation reveals an interest in him Angela is determined to protect both her source and her fledgling relationship with O'Connor. Meanwhile, two young female lawyers from a law firm in Sydney have disappeared. Are the missing lawyers linked to the dead judge? Can O'Connor unravel the connections before the body count rises further? And how much does Angela Avery really know?

Reviews

<https://www.debbish.com/>

I was initially disappointed that *Glenrock*, by Lee Christine, wasn't going to feature some of the characters from her earlier work but very much enjoyed those she introduced here and now hope to see / meet them again. She introduces a few plot lines – something that sometimes frustrates me if they ultimately connect in a very nebulous way, but that's not the case here. She offers two or three distinct storylines that are all connected and merge in a way that isn't contrived or coincidental. Rather there's an obvious causal relationship that effortlessly (and tragically) plays out.

Here we're offered two main characters, (cop) Callan and (former journalist) Angela with a good dose of young lawyer Goldie thrown into the mix. The link between all three cases becomes clear fairly quickly though we're not exactly sure what's precipitated them coming to a head, forcing the death of the judge and what-comes-next.

Angela and Callan are likeable leads. Callan's moved to Newcastle after his ex-wife had a stroke so his son could be near his mother, and Angela's hiding in Newcastle after being attacked by a stalker in Adelaide (and I suspect we may come back to that storyline in future books as it's not examined in much detail here). They're separately dealing with pieces of the puzzle, though ultimately join forces. Goldie and colleague (and flatmate) Nicola's piece of the puzzle takes longer to be revealed but it helps unearth the twenty-five year old secrets now coming to light.

Christine paces this book well, particularly that last puzzle piece, and balances the investigation(s) with a bit of romance and family drama. She also manages to imbue a sense of place, something she does in her novels set in snowfields in New South Wales. I've never been to Newcastle but had a sense of its juxtaposition of mining and industry with scenic beaches and nearby wineries. I very much enjoyed this and am looking forward to again meeting with both Angela and Callan.

Lee Christine's latest Australian thriller is set in Newcastle, in and around the stretch of coastline known as Glenrock State Conservation Area. I love reading books set in places I have a close, personal connection to. Lee Christine is a Novacastrian through and through and you can 100% tell in this book. It's brimming with the feel and vibe of Newcastle, the geography is immediately recognisable to anyone who has even a passing acquaintance with it.

This book starts with a bang – a Judge is ruminating over a decision he must make as he takes his early morning walk along the same route he takes every day. This will be his last though and his murder quickly kicks off an investigation that Detective Senior Sergeant Callan O'Connor knows will bring both a lot of scrutiny and his old colleagues from Homicide. Callan used to work Homicide in Sydney, travelling all over the state of NSW to investigate murders but transferred out of that to Newcastle for personal reasons. His local knowledge will give him some investigative power on this case but Homicide will take the lead, sending a man Callan also has a history with.

Whilst this is going on, local reporter, Angela Avery, is working on a story for a weekend magazine piece about an incarcerated criminal who is painting murals for the city. Angela and Callan met at a bar and connected just before the Judge's murder and Callan is interested in getting to know her better despite his personal situation being difficult to explain and perhaps difficult for a potential partner to understand. Angela has reason to be wary after an incident in her former state led her to change up her life and move to Newcastle but she finds herself trusting Callan. And when she delves a bit deeper into the person she's writing about, she's stunned to realise where it's leading. It's going to be up to Angela and Callan to connect the dots and figure out who murdered the Judge....and more importantly, why.

I was hooked on this book from the very start! It's so well paced, I read it in one sitting in an afternoon. It switches between several different perspectives to give the reader more of the picture and each perspective always had interesting revelations and kept adding pieces to the puzzle. I really liked Callan and respected him for the decisions he had made and how he prioritised things that were important to him. Angela had an interesting backstory that had definitely impacted on the person she was now. Newcastle was a fresh start for her, a switch in focus but underneath, she discovers that a part of her still itches for her old ways, that she is still capable of doing more. I liked the two of them together as well, despite Callan's complications they felt low drama. Callan is forty-two (my age!) and Angela in her thirties so both of them felt settled and secure in knowing what they wanted and how to work towards it. Angela understands Callan's situation remarkably well.

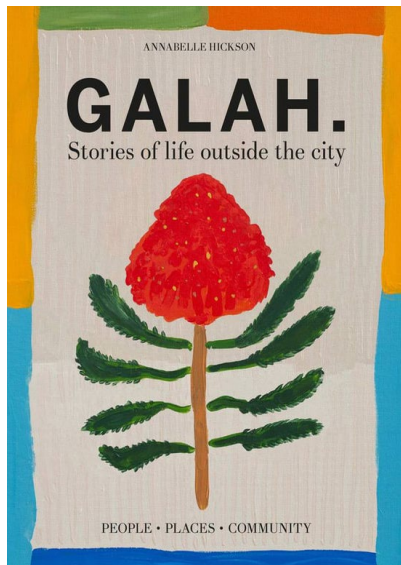
The mystery of the Judge's death was engrossing and definitely kept me turning the pages. I also felt like his family were portrayed really well. There was a lot happening in this book and the page count isn't large but it was all woven together effortlessly, I found myself putting together the answers along with the characters and becoming invested in the process.

Big tick on the setting in this one for me, already mentioned that. But the story itself was just as good as the showcasing of Newcastle. It gave me huge nostalgic vibes to read this (not the murder bit, but the characters travelling around and describing various parts). Would highly recommend this one to anyone but I think if you know and love Newy, you'll enjoy this just that little bit more.

Book Review

Galah : Stories of life outside the city : people, places, community

Edited by Annabelle Hickson Non Fiction 2024



A stunning visual and written anthology celebrating life in regional Australia curated by Galah magazine founder, award-winning writer and editor Annabelle Hickson.

It can be easy to assume nothing much happens beyond the city, if that's all you've known. But that, of course, is far from the truth. Here, across six themed chapters, journalist Annabelle Hickson shares a different perspective on life in regional Australia, featuring stories from the coast to the farms, from the bush to the towns, from the rainforest to the outback.

Annabelle brings together the best work from more than 50 leading writers, photographers and artists from her award-winning magazine, celebrating not only incredible landscapes and remarkable, beautiful places, but also the diversity, resourcefulness and creativity of the people that call the country home.

About the Author

Author Biography: *Galah's* editor Annabelle Hickson didn't plan to live in regional Australia, but she fell in love with a handsome farmer from western NSW, so she thought she'd give it a shot. She knew there'd be some sacrifices - her journalism career at *The Australian*, the beach and takeaway food that is still hot by the time you get home - but she had no idea how many opportunities there would be for her in this new life too. While her husband Ed planted pecan trees, Annabelle looked after their three young children, wrote a regular monthly column at *Country Style Magazine* and published a book, *A Tree in the House*, that has been sold all over the world.

Annabelle began to learn what it was to be part of a community, all in it together. Everywhere she looked she saw smart, clever and resilient people who talked about opportunities instead of limitations. This was in stark contrast to the simple-country-people stereotypes she'd bought into in the city.

Twelve years after moving west, as the 2019-2020 drought eased, Annabelle wanted to read stories from regional Australia that weren't about disadvantage. Lack of water, lack of jobs, and lack in general were all real, but they were not the only narrative from regional Australia. Annabelle also wanted to hear stories that reflected her own sense of luck at being able to live out of the city. She wanted to read about beauty and freedom and opportunities. She wanted a publication that assumed people in regional Australia were a smart and increasingly diverse lot, who cared about community and creativity and the environment, as well as profitability. And she wanted a publication that acted as a bridge between the city and country divide. So, she made *Galah* the magazine. It is born in book form from that widely acclaimed, much beloved biannual magazine. A best of, if you like, of that singular ongoing print project.

<https://www.booktopia.com.au/>

Industry Reviews

'*Galah* does something unique, compelling and beautiful, and I admire the way it connects people from all over Australia into its community.' LEIGH SALES

Galah Magazine

Galah is an independent print magazine documenting regional Australia and the people who live here.

Three times a year we publish an award-winning magazine - it's more like a book than a mag - and in between, we work on making newsletters you actually want to read.

Regional Australia has so much more going on than droughts, floods and fires. Let Galah be your guide.

Why did you start *Galah*?

A few years ago, I started a print magazine from my kitchen table on a quiet pecan farm in a small valley. I had no real publishing or business experience, no employees, no money, but I did have a dust-covered dictaphone from my newspaper journalist days and a borderline desperate desire to read stories from regional Australia that weren't all doom and gloom.

We'd just gone through three years of drought, mouse plagues, fires and then floods. It wasn't an easy time, but even at its worst, I still felt that living in the country was a great privilege. The stories on the news about life in regional Australia were all so bleak and depressing, but I didn't feel like a victim, and I didn't see victims when I looked around me. The stereotypes of simple, complaining farmers or backward hillbillies didn't ring true to my experience. Instead, more often than not, life out here felt full of excitement, opportunity and delight.

I became obsessed with the idea of creating a platform for stories from the country that weren't all about hardship. I wanted to read stories that reflected the modern and diverse people who chose to live outside of the city. I wanted to read about creativity, success and opportunities. And I wanted to read them on things that didn't flash or beep, that I could stack up on the kitchen table and that I could hold in the bath without fear of mild electrocution. So I started *Galah*.

If you could sum up the magazine in five words, how would you describe it?

I'll do it in four: Life beyond the city.

What kind of writing do you publish?

Galah is a national cultural magazine focused on life and creativity in regional and rural Australia. At 180 pages, it's more like a book than a magazine. It's both brainy and beautiful. It's definitely not fluffy, nor is it gloomy. A reader described it as 'the *New York Times* meets *Country Style*', a description which made me very happy. We publish a huge range of stories—3000-word features on how to solve the housing crisis, 1500-word artist profiles, stories about gardeners and producers and people with original houses or creative practices...

The best way to understand what type of writing we publish is to read a *Galah*. I get lots of emails from people saying that they'd love to write for us, asking me to keep them in mind for future stories, but I don't really know what to do with these emails because they lack specificity. I love to receive emails from writers with specific ideas.

<https://www.killyourdarlings.com.au/article/literary-magazine-showcase-galah/>