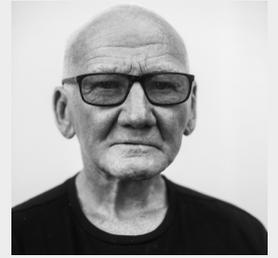


# A new verse novella from award winning poet Geoff Goodfellow



## ***Blight Street***

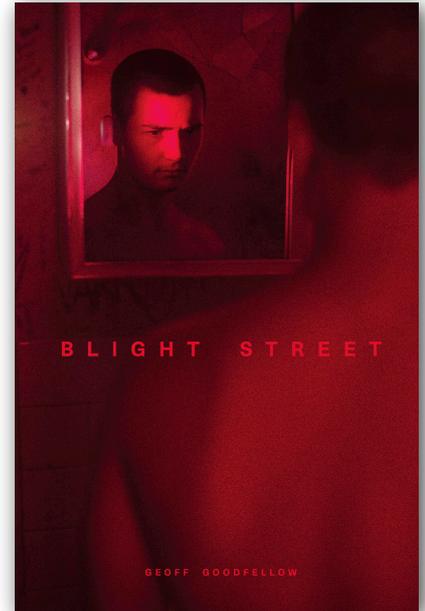
**Blight Street** provides a harrowing account of living on the margins in outer-suburban contemporary Australia. It reveals the use of ice and alcohol as self-medications, of decay and unemployment – and the way crime can become a job to help plug the gap; of teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse, problem gambling; of generational single parent families and the difficulties they face in confronting their day-to-day lives, whether at home, in school, or jail.

Sixteen-year-old Carl and his girlfriend Larissa reveal the lives they have been born into. Life is never easy for these two. Both their mothers are struggling with different issues, both their fathers are imprisoned for different reasons.

**Blight Street** is an unsettling read. It offers a broader view of the world, one that is tragic and at times terrifying – but it is not without tenderness, too. It speaks of tough lives and uses tough language. But it shows that even when faced with great adversity, love in its many guises is the glue which holds people together. This verse novella reveals a slice of Australian life which is seldom written about, other than in background reports handed up in pre-sentence reports to magistrates and judges.

**Blight Street** opens with a Foreword from the Honourable Chris Kourakis, Chief Justice of South Australia. In his conclusion he states: *This is a must for parents, for teachers, for young adults and for everyone who has an understanding of, and sympathy for, human frailty and the raw emotions of the human condition.*

**At Writer's Week** during the **2022 Adelaide Festival** on Monday, 7th March at 10:45AM, **Blight Street** is programmed for a live performance on the **Plane Tree Stage**. Actor Nic Darrigo will deliver the voice of 16 year old Carl, voice artist and actor Roslyn Oades will deliver the voice of Carl's 16 year old girlfriend Larissa, and Geoff Goodfellow will speak as Sean, Carl's 34 year old father, his voice coming from a prison cell. The Chair for this session will be Rick Sarre, Emeritus Professor of Law and Criminal Justice at the UniSA. Following the performance, Rick will engage Geoff in conversation on the novella.



**Copies of *Blight Street* can be purchased for \$20 + \$2.50 postage**

Orders may be placed by phone or email. An invoice will be mailed with books for 7-day payment by direct debit.

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All three of the predominant themes of Geoff Goodfellow's substantial contribution to Australian literature run through this verse novella: the heroism of working class struggle. The tragedy of addiction and the celebration of love and sexual attraction.

Geoff has always shown a concern for those abandoned youths who are left to navigate their way through the dysfunction wrought by alcohol, drugs and violence. Blight Street continues Geoff's iconoclastic disregard for stale literary formalism, in order to allow his protagonists to relate their narratives in their own voices.

'I won't get into the Ice like me old man' says Carl, 'the thought of what it's done ... leaves me cold'.

From his prison cell Carl's father laments that 'no-one comes to see me now' but is still making 'too many excuses' while Carl is left to 'pull and hold his crying mother in tight' on the occasion of her fourth 'AA birthday'.

'Pity it wasn't bloody more' swears Larissa about the prison sentence imposed on her abusive father.

This book is a must for parents, for teachers, for young adults and for everyone who has an understanding of, and sympathy for, human frailty and the raw emotions of the human condition.

**The Honourable Chris Kourakis, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia**

Reading as a vintage child protection social worker of almost forty years – I can verify that Geoff Goodfellow's poignant and powerful words, bring to life the harsh conditions and raw emotion experienced by far too many facing the relentless daily grind of survival as testified in Blight Street.

By illuminating this 'invisible' reality, Goodfellow offers hope through glimmers of acute self-insight peppered with flashes of fierce resilience and heart warming optimism. Blight Street is beautifully and brutally confronting and totally resonates with my working experience in Northern Ireland during 'the Troubles' and in Australia.

**Karen Flanagan AM, Principal Advisor Child Protection, Save the Children Australia**

Those readers who have locked onto the poetry of Geoff Goodfellow since the late 1980's will find this verse novella quite reflective of his confronting, somewhat aggressive and 'message containing' story telling style.

However, his fans expect a respectful sensitivity to emerge and it does in these three stories which portray the troubled, precarious existence (but with prospect for resolution) of three families struggling and barely surviving in circumstances of varying levels of adversity.

While there isn't any clear resolution of the sufferings and circumstances of the protagonists in this novella, Geoff Goodfellow allows a definite but varying degree of optimism to develop in each of the stories. Individual readers will experience this according to their own perceptions and experiences.

The novella will highlight to the more privileged reader, who knows of the existence of but little else about the truth of this compromised group in society, of the need to ensure that they receive the assistance that they want and deserve.

**Dr. Terence Donald, Paediatric Forensic Physician**