

## Standing up for the Downtrodden

□ THERE is nothing like poetry published by the Vulgar Press. Then again, there is nothing particularly vulgar about Geoff Goodfellow's poetry under this UTLC imprint. One can only assume it is branding to give Geoff cred in the stubby-holder underclass.

Geoff's public is not really of the reader class, anyway. He takes his writing out to the people – performing in pubs and on worksites, demystifying the idea of poetry by making it a celebration of prosaism. It makes better listening than reading.

Which is not to say that it cannot gratify us bookish types – as this new **PUNCH ON PUNCH OFF** (Vulgar Press, \$14.95) effectively has done.

It's lovely, strong agitprop poetry, mellowed out with some wistful observational writing and some piquant nostalgia.

The book opens with quite a bang – a poetic attack on one Lindsay Thompson, general manager, South

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Mr Thompson apparently told Goodfellow the workers had their chance to learn poetry at school and “it's a bit late now”. Goodfellow responds with a groin-kicker of a poem.

Through the book's 72 pages, Goodfellow visits many contemporary labour issues as well as issues of social justice. One can feel his love for the downtrodden. One knows he is right.

Among the best of a pleasing batch of poems is *Turning in Circles*, which talks about the good old days when refugees were acknowledged as the “new Australians”.

The favourite for this writer, however, is *Old Ways/Old Days* which tells of terrazzo, “as Italian as mortadella, so beautiful you wish sometimes you could eat it”.

Then again, there's *The Lonely* which taps in to the soul of solitude 2004, and quietly breaks one's heart.

Samela Harris