Edith Speers was born in Canada and migrated to Australia in 1974. Her educational background is in Science, but writing in general and the English language in particular have been her obsessions since childhood. Since 1975 she has resided on a rural property in southern Tasmania. Although her work has won many literary prizes and her poetry has been published in all the major magazines and anthologies of the past twenty years, only one collection of verse has been published and it is no longer in print. The appearance of this volume has been a long-awaited literary event.

This project was assisted through Arts Tasmania by the Premier, Minister for State Development

The Regional Arts Fund is a Commonwealth Government initiative through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

Copyright Edith Speers 2001

ISBN 1 876342 10 2

Published by
Esperance Press

Editor: Edith Speers

Dover, Tasmania, Australia 7117
Ph (03) 62981036 Fax (03) 62981940
esperancepress.com.au

Four Quarters

poetry by

Edith Speers

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express appreciation for the existence in Australia of the many magazines, anthologies, organisations and competitions which offer publication, performance, payment and recognition for the work of writers.
Poems in this collection have been previously published or been assisted by:
ABC Bicentenniel Literary Competition, ABC Radio - 'Fictions Poetry', Anthology of Australian Verse (Oxford University Press), Australian Antarctic Division (1993 Solstice Celebration), Beckett Theatre (Melbourne), Bulletin, Edgeways, Famous Reporter, Harold Kestevan Poetry Prize, Heartland, Hecate, Hobo, Imago, Island, Kunapippi, LaBoite Theatre (Brisbane), Larrikin, Meanjin, Modern Families (Macmillan Education Australia), Moments of Desire (Penguin), Moorilla Mosaic (BumbleBee Books), Muse, Overland, Poetry Australia, Quadrant, Readings - Experiences and Memories (McGraw-Hill), Republic Readings (Hobart), Southerly, Southern Review, Tasmanian Poetry Festival (program), The Australian Writers Journal, The Penguin Book of Australian Women Poets (Penguin), The Stables Theatre (Sydney), The Sting in the Wattle (University of Queensland Press), Up from Below (Womens Redress Press), Warana Writers Competition, Westerly

Dedicated to my parents

Anna de Kroon MacKenzie Speers

and

William Gordon Speers

Contents

Free

page 1

free 3
crazy 5
not so crazy 6
A bolt from the blue 7
superstition 8
letter to a friend 9
i'd love to live in paris but 11
plugs and points 12
The colour of my van 13
A rough sketch 15
Chastity is 16
gossip 17
The heart is a muscle 18
It helps to have a brother 19
why i like men 21
yes i'm a sexist 22
science fiction 23
how things looked 24
brief report by an alien 25
The Hydro demonstration 26
letter to the spirit world 29
love is not a garden it's the weeds 31
rat tail soup 33
Five minutes of not being depressed 37
it's hard to be free 39
The way out 41
prayer 43

Rude Rhymes for Raving Ratbags page 45

Song of the Artiste 47
cats rule ok 49
nicotine you field 51
Out of the nursery rhymes 52
ratbag 55
hang me said the lamb of god 57
holy people give me the creeps 59
weird kid 60
I'm not responsible, baby 61
stoned on stones 63
pardon my french 65
cry, baby 67
taking the easy way out 68
Epitaph for an evil bitch 71
Epitaph for an enemy 72
Cultural Bedbugs 73
Warning to Poets in Particular 75
To the Journalist Buzz Kennedy 77
Bless Them All 81
values 83
truth 84

Love Sonnets page 85

1 - Time can stop 87
3 - It is because light bends 88
6 - A cat won't crave a rose 89
9 - Darling! I have to see you! 90
23 - What on earth am I supposed to do 91
29 - The days of love are always short and sweet 92
35 - Oh, my Tubby Wubbins! Beautiful cat! 93
38 - Diana, protect us women 94
42 - There's no comfort in love 95
44 - Love can be heaven if your luck is good 96
45 - It isn't much, an hour and a half 97
49 - Once upon a time and far away 98
53 - The total obsession with love 99
54 - Two cornflakes on the table 100
55 - From out of the ground and into the sky 101
63 - God wanted to apologise 102
65 - The cricket's on the radio - hurray! 103
66 - When all that should be sweet 104
67 - We two have met a thousand times before 105
68 - It seems that no one falls in love these days 106
69 - Love is a tiger 107
70 - Have no comets streaked across your sky? 108
72 - Sheep and cattle graze but goats will browse 109
73 - Isn't it funny? 110
74 - Addiction is an awful thing, we think 111
75 - Of all the sins that people have invented 112
76 - Once a week I kneel, but not to pray 113
80 - Thank God at last the wattles are in bloom 114
82 - Put a bullet in the rifle's breech 115
83 - Desperation isn't love, you know 116
90 - Preening behaviour 117
91 - Bees are buzzing 118
92 - Every autumn they appear 119
94 - Can love forgive the cheapskate relative 120
95 - If you're expecting gratitude, forget it 121
96 - Home is a foreign country 122

Soul of a Great Nation

page 123

British Columbia 125
Break your heart beautiful 128
The Loggers' Motel 130
Trains in the Night 134
The Source of it all 136
Folding Mountain 139
Grass Lake, Alberta 141
Fortress of Green 143
The Way the Horses Flow 145
Wildflower Blue 147
Trucks 149
The Dinosaurs Drip 151
Ratbags and Roustabouts 152
100 Linkes in a Chain 153
The One Big Stone Ontario 155
Branch Line 157
A Walk in the Dark 159
Die poor and leave nothing 161
Soft Summer 164
West Coast 165
Stepstone Haiku 166
Decked Out Haiku 166
Warm Fog 167
Visiting the Mummy 169
Orca 173
The hook in the heart 175
A Tasmanian at the Vancouver Aquarium 177

esperancepress.com.au

Readers' pages for 'Four Quarters'
by Edith Speers

For sample poems
return to Esperance Press <Publications>
and click on <Sample from Book>