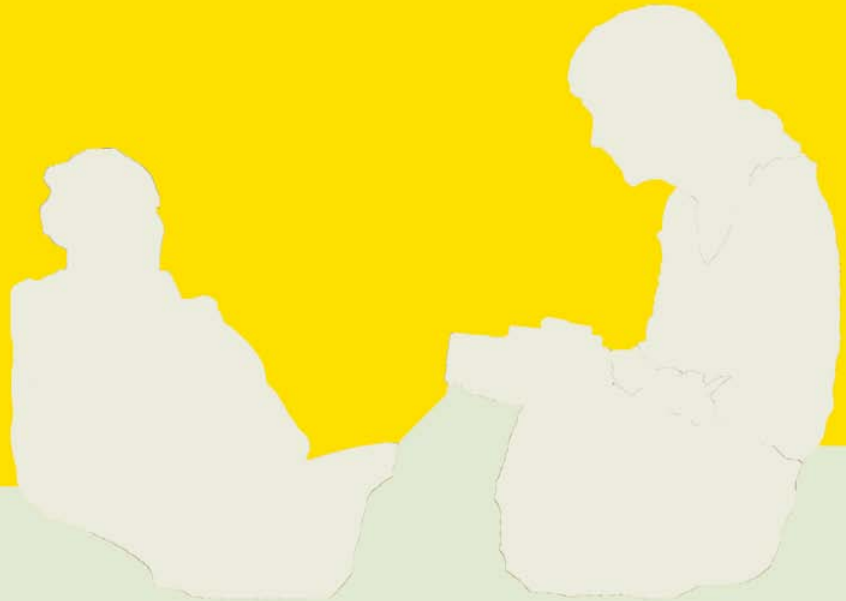


BookBUS

A resource manual for reading aloud



Lily Hibberd in collaboration with The Footpath Library
P4 (pilot) 2010

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Published by Performance Space, Sydney
for P4 (pilot)

ISBN 978-0-9808700-0-8

Acknowledgements and special thanks to

Sarah Garnett founder of The Footpath Library

BookBus coordinator Lucas Ihlein

Performance Space and P4 (pilot) project manager Bec Dean and administrator Shuxia Chan

The generosity and talent of the BookBUS volunteers

City of Sydney, especially Nina Bullock and Michael Abbott

Edward Eagar Lodge Acting Manager, Rob Seaton

Eveleigh Market Manager, Ariana Aljinovic

BookBUS model Anusha Kenny



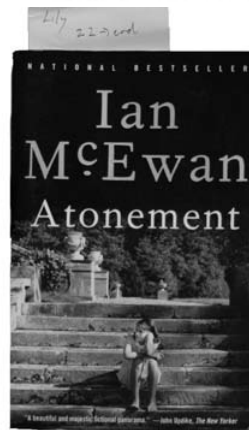
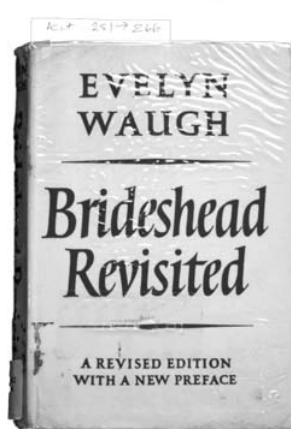
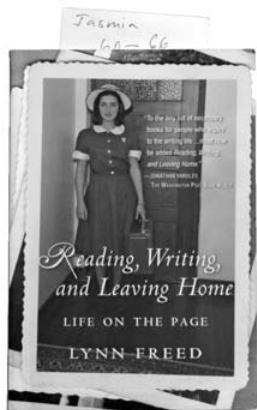
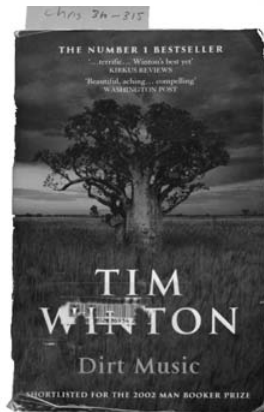
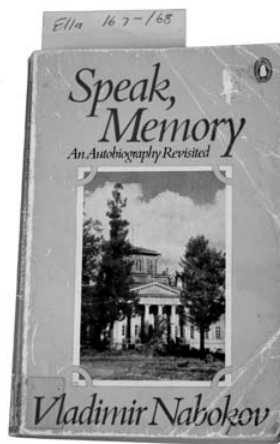
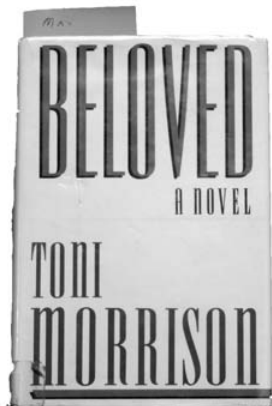
Lily Hibberd is an artist and writer. She is founding editor of un Magazine, lectures in the Faculty of Art & Design at Monash University and is a member of The Artists Book Research Group

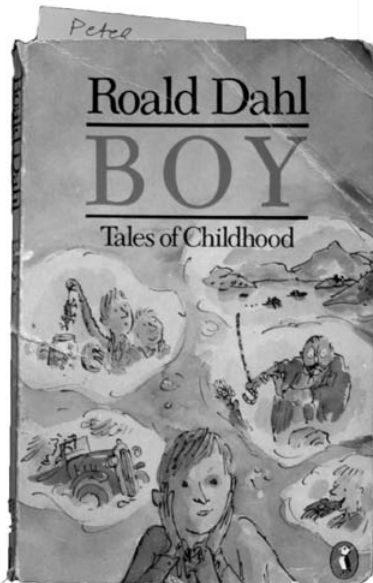


BookBUS is a live reading activity that will visit a number of inner city Sydney sites from 12–14 November 2010. Housed in The Footpath Library's mobile book van, BookBUS will be staffed with volunteers who will read to you aloud from a book of your choosing for approximately fifteen minutes. Everyone will be encouraged to exchange their thoughts about the experience following the reading. You are also invited to loan books from your own library to share with others.

BookBUS is about the way we invest and imagine ourselves within a book. It highlights how the books we read create a sense of who we are, both through our original encounter with the story and whenever we recollect ourselves and the book anew. Reading aloud is associated for many with a longing for remnants of early childhood and the parental intimacy of the bedtime story. While such humans emotions are universal the imaginary dimension of the book is facing dramatic change, some saying that the book itself is under threat. This is mainly because of a series of social and technological revolutions, including the 19th century invention of reading as a private activity, the anonymity of library books and the rise of mass media and digital communications that are bypassing the object of the book altogether. By fostering the shared art of storytelling BookBUS seeks to revive the experience of the book as an object that helps us to create, carry and share our dreams, ambitions and memories.

What is BookBUS





Can you remember the first book you ever read? Words are hard to separate from sounds, pictures merge with senses and colours. You are nestled into your mother's shoulder. A comforting smell of washed wool and familiar, yellow low lighting curls in around the cover of the book, covering its title. Is it tactile like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*? Or is the book a visionary hallucination in the realm of James's giant peach? I remember feeling the chill of *The Snow Queen's* frozen world and fearing her cold, cold heart. But *The Couch That Ate Monsieur Racine* was worse.

Decades later, we read alone. The intensity of feeling is there still as we are taken in by the power of fiction. Sometimes that reality slips over into another sensation. It's like that first memory in the special place with someone who is there reading to us, sharing the book with us as we share ourselves with them.

The book regained



How to read together in 13 simple steps



Leave home



2

Walk to your local library



Arrive at your library



4





Enter the library



6

Browse the shelves



Choose a book that you like



8

Find a volunteer reader



9

Give the reader your chosen book



10

Wait for your volunteer to start reading to you



11

Enjoy the story

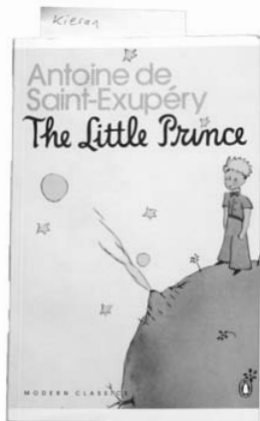


Have a chat with your volunteer about the book



13

Go on your way contentedly

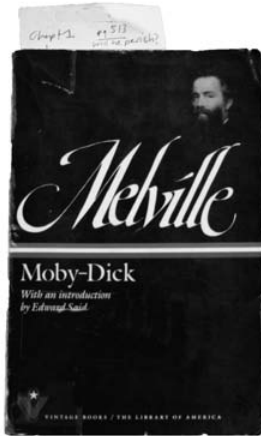


***The Little Prince* Antoine de Saint-Exupéry**

Kieran tells me that he kept *The Little Prince* by his bed up until he was fifteen. He had wanted to buy it again for years, saying, "It's a rather precious book to me." Sharing the book with others gave Kieran the perfect excuse.

The boy in the story is lost. Not because he has left home but because the people where he is from don't understand him. He loves to draw. He hopes the pictures will speak for him. But everyone mistakes his boa constrictor for a hat. The little Prince is from a tiny world. He helps the boy to see things from another point of view. Instead of drawing it as the world sees it for him, The little Prince helps the boy to draw the world for himself.

Shared stories about books



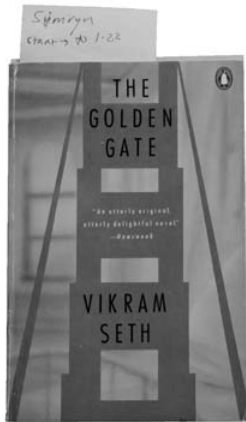
Moby Dick Hermann Melville

Let's get this straight; Moby Dick never ate Ahab. It's the first thing that comes to mind of course, and being in the belly of a whale is an oddly comforting thought. Moby Dick is probably the only creature on the planet that could do the job of swallowing one of us whole. Reading a marvellous story is much like being slowly digested into the body of a book, and *Moby Dick* is perfect for the voracious reader.

Whale hunting is at its height in Ahab's time. His livelihood depends on every imaginable part of the great animal's body: its meat and its blubber; its bones and its cartilage; its brain and the prized residue of its gut, the odiferous ambergris, which is still sought after by parfumiers today.

The grand narrative of this tale is that Moby Dick is never caught. The great white whale is the single fish that escapes the human undertaking to consume everything both on the earth and in the sea. Lucas chose the book because he thought that the Melville made the ocean into a place of belonging for the whale. Lucas writes that "Captain Ahab and the white whale are locked in a mortal battle which takes place across the entire globe," and he asks: "Who owns the ocean? Who owns the whales?"

The sea is a wild place, unconquerable and home to nobody, least of all the hunters invading and raiding the marine world. In *Moby Dick* the whale refuses to relinquish its home. He belongs to the ocean and after reading Melville's tale we can imagine sharing the white whale's home by belonging to his ocean that is the book, becoming part of *Moby Dick's* world instead of conquering it and its creatures.



***The Golden Gate* Vikram Seth**

When we are in love we are a part of something much bigger than we can visualize. A system of miniscule flows of information are embedded in a tiny piece of yourself, in a boundless place. Although it's set in the Silicon Valley, Vikram Seth doesn't hardwire the story to that premise.

Memories move between people like electrical charges in data storage. The gateway of memory is now found in a little chip. An itsy bit of silicon threaded with gold, an ornament of the information age. Simryn posted her copy of *The Golden Gate*, saying that it is about love and writing, "It's delicious to read and even better read aloud; witty, gentle and affectionate. A heart breaker!"

The Golden Gate is a story of a love triangle in West Coast America, and is about the kind of belonging that exists between three people. In a triangle love is a conduit, like the gold wire is to the data in a chip. There is no place of belonging, just the passage; a crossing over from one to the other. Maybe that's what Simryn was hoping thinking of. The suspension cables of that famous bridge look like a system but the bridge forms an imaginary relationship between land and air, and we put our trust in it just like we put our memories and feelings into intangible objects. We create love by giving love to others, and our deep and shifting emotions are made memorable through the things we encounter that help us to make love real. Books do the same thing.

And this book which my mother had read aloud to me at Combray until the early hours of the morning had kept for me all the charm of that night...

For things – and among them a book in a red binding – as soon as we have perceived them are transformed within us into something immaterial, something of the same nature as all our preoccupations and sensations of that particular, with which, indissolubly, they blend. A name read in a book of former; days contains within its syllables the swift wind and the brilliant sunshine that prevailed while we were reading it...

Nor is this all. A thing which we saw, a book which we read at a certain period does not merely remain for ever conjoined to what existed then around us; it remains also faithfully united to what we ourselves then were and thereafter it can be handled only by the sensibility, the personality that were then ours. If, even in thought, I pick up from the bookshelf *François le Champi*, immediately there rises within me a child who takes my place, and who reads it as he read it once before, with the same impression of what the weather was like then in the garden, with the same dreams that were then shaping themselves in his mind about different countries and about life, the same anguish about the next day. Or if I see something which dates from another period, it is a young man who comes to life. So that my personality of today may be compared to an abandoned quarry, which supposes everything that it contains to be uniform and monotonous, but from which memory, selecting here and there can, like some Greek sculptor, extract innumerable different statues. And this is true of everything that we see again after a lapse of time, books in this respect behaving just like other things: the way in which the covers of a binding open, the grain of a particular paper, may have preserved itself as vivid a memory of the fashion in which I once imagined Venice and of the desire I had to go there as the actual phrases of the book.¹

¹ Marcel Proust, *The Remembrance of Things Past (In Search of Lost Time)*, vol 12, "Time Regained", trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff. London: Chatto & Windus, 1931, 248 -250.

The Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library was started in 2003 by Sarah Garnett, a corporate communications producer from Sydney's northern beaches. Sarah noticed a homeless man sitting under a street light reading a book, they had a conversation, she brought him a book and The Footpath Library was borne.

The Footpath Library aims to make books more accessible to homeless and disadvantaged people, encourage literacy and change people's attitudes towards the marginalised in our society. We install and stock libraries in hostels, refuges and community organizations and make a regular delivery of new and secondhand books, which do not need to be returned.

For more information on how you can help www.footpathlibrary.org



This work was commissioned by Performance Space and Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts in 2010 as a part of P4, a live art initiative supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body and by the British Council

