Seven books in the Everyman series, distributed through Houghton Mifflin Australia, are a useful addition to the more reasonably priced paperbacks available (averaging below $15.00 a copy), and most of them could find a place on tertiary, and in some cases, secondary curricula. Apart from the educational value, this reprint of classical favourites like George Moore's *Esther Waters*, G.K. Chesterton's *The Best of Father Brown*, Katherine Mansfield's *Short Stories* selected and introduced by biographer Claire Tomalin, and Oscar Wilde's *Plays, Prose Writings and Poems*, will be welcomed by many readers who have lost their old copies or who are just beginning a library. It is interesting to see how some writing loses much of its potential to reinform the present, and how other literature, although very much of its own time, remains valid as more than an interesting piece of good writing. Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, for example, are genuinely timeless, whereas Chesterton's Father Brown stories, although often interesting and ingenious, are also dated and ingenious, not because of the skilfully affirmed spiritual world of Father Brown, but because of the stories' rampant xenophobia and fear of the “Orient.” Edward Said would have a great time analysing these stories, although when re-reading old favourites first met in adolescence, I began to find the depression brought on by this fear of foreigners outweighed the pleasure received from Father Brown's charm and clever simplicity. The collection, however, offers less vulnerable classics, including Guy de Maupassant's *The House of Madame Tellier and Other Stories*. In each book the Introductions are reprints of excellent and fairly recent pieces. The books are well designed and should stand up to handling about as well as most paperbacks.

Australian biography flourishes these days, as do collections of writings like John Shaw Neilson's *Poetry, autobiography and correspondence* edited by Cliff Hanna and published by University of Queensland Press. Hanna’s Introduction and notes are useful to students and researchers in literary and other fields, and also assist a general reader who reads poetry for pleasure — and John Shaw Neilson's work is characterised by its ability to give the kind of pleasure that often lies too deep for tears.
It is good to see that Hanna dedicates the book to Ruth Harrison, a researcher who found and edited a number of Shaw Neilson manuscripts while a young undergraduate at the University of Queensland. Hanna's editorial work is sound, although it omits reference to a few critical works that would have expanded usefully the selected bibliography, notably the commentary by Val Vallis given as part of his lectures for the Foundation of Australian Literary Studies and published in Townsville in 1988. At $22.95, John Shaw Neilson's Poetry, autobiography and correspondence is good value, although most lecturers might be reluctant to set it on a tertiary course where it would be only one of some dozen texts students are expected to buy. Another text at the same price is UQP's edition of Julie Lewis's Olga Masters: A Lot of Living. A competent and sympathetic account, which leaves the reader with the feeling of a real person rather than some unlikely saint, this biography confirms that Australian literature lost a unique writer when Olga Masters died at the age of 67 in 1986. Yet the book is a celebration of a woman who did it all — husband, children, home, career and art — a lot of living indeed. There are no endnotes and only a brief note on sources, but this book is a good starting point for the general reader and researcher.

"Hosted," as it says, rather than edited by Helen Daniel, Millenium, available from Penguin Australia at $14.95, is a more workaday production in design, and is a companion to Daniel's Expressway in which a number of Australian writers were imagined interacting with Jeffrey Smart's Sydney painting "Cahill Expressway." Here forty-one interestingly assorted Australian writers offer meditations or fictional constructions on the notion of the millenium (a period of one thousand years) one of which will be upon those of us who survive in nine years' time. If some of us regret that we may cease to be before that, it might well be regret at leaving behind not only the natural world which many are just beginning to appreciate, but also the world of human imagination and idiosyncrasy which is created in these pages. It's not the form and content of these pieces which matter, although they are often quite valuable as writing, but their evidence that the Australian mind and imagination, shared among what is a pretty small population by most national standards, are so diverse and many faceted. Daniel organises the collection with some interesting notions, and Millenium is a good paperback for browsing and for pursuing ideas and styles.

Andrew Taylor's Folds in the Map and Bruce Beaver's New and Selected Poems 1960-1990 are a little erratically priced from UQP at
$19.95 each, since Beaver’s collection runs to 276 pages and Taylor’s to 88 pages. The reprinting of Beaver’s *Letters to Live Poets* is most welcome, for these controlled, unrhymed and variously rhythmed poems retain the wisdom, pain and modest pride with which they impressed readers when they appeared in 1969. Beaver’s poetry is unmistakably Australian, yet has the placeless quality of some of the best poetry written anywhere in English. In the last section, an impeccably formed sonnet to fellow poet John Blight, and a series of incidental pieces like that on Randall Jarrell, a dog on a skate board, bulbuls and the bond between child and mother, demonstrate that good poetry has always been used to commemorate intimate and homely moments. This is also true of Taylor’s collection, the work of a well-published and respected poet who cannot be placed in a comfortable niche of poetic elder statesmanship. The deftness with which Taylor wraps his wry observations in words makes memorable the house and officescapes of suburban life, and the mild, strange encounters of travel abroad. The Roman poets of the Silver Age would feel at home here, a testimony to the continuity of some aspects of civilised living.

By contrast, Penguin’s collection of work by four performance poets in *Live Sentences* ($14.95) evokes a different tradition, a fleeting reminder of Skelton or Dunbar, perhaps, because performance poets, although not invariably scatological or abusive, seldom mince their words. This collection by John Ashton, Kerry Scuffins, Myron Lysenko and Lauren Williams also offers a brief portrait and a few comments from each poet, and should prove popular with people of all ages who think they do not like poetry. Firm and witty, the poems scan most areas of private and social experience, and like Lauren Williams’ poems on cars and sex, or Myron Lysenko’s poem about his effort to Make a Baby the Separatist Way, or shop for organically grown fruit and vegetables, they make fun of without belittling the well-intentioned mores of the under fifties generation.

David Brooks’ *Sheep and the Diva*, published in 1990 by McPhee Gribble is also well priced at $12.99, and has an elegant cover design by Kay Watts. Brooks writes some of my favourite Australian poetry, and his first collection of stories, *The Book of Sei and other stories* translated into prose the perceptive mysticism and somewhat sad sense of wonder that characterises much of his poetry. The title of this collection appears to have been suggested by a comment by the critic Don Anderson who, when reviewing *The Book of Sei*, remarked, “you wish its author
were a diva and its readers an ecstatic audience packed into an opera house.” The stories in this collection also exist in a not quite real world, where places have names like Tandelo, Mysander and Icara, on the borderline between the material world and a different kind of reality which many of us inhabit a good deal of the time.

Janette Turner Hospital’s *The Ivory Swing*, another well priced paperback at $14.95 from UQP, is set in southern India where David has taken Juliet and her children for a year from their home in Canada. As in Brooks’ stories, the action seems to take place in a liminal region between everyday western values and reality and a less material world that westerners only half understand. Yet for women, in both worlds the patriarchal fears and needs still dominate. Juliet may seem free, in control of her life, and her sexuality may seem on equal terms with David’s, but after the shaving and humiliation of the beautiful young Yashoda accused of fornication, their aristocratic neighbour clarifies the fear that still haunts the most civilized and intelligent patriarchal mind:

Ghandi himself, Professor David, on his own ashram, commanded the head of a young woman to be shaven. Though she herself had done no wrong, she had by her carnal beauty caused lust and impurity to enter the thoughts of the young male disciples. Ghandi himself has seen the need to curb the carnal power of woman.

David is honest and recognises the fear in himself, but fear is dangerous when allied to superstition, ignorance, greed and patriarchal power, and the band of drunken labourers who kill Yashoda and the young fluteplayer cannot entirely be distinguished from the great Indian pacifist, or the learned Canadian scholar. At the end, Juliet and the children leave David and return to Canada, perhaps only a temporary separation.

Dale Spender’s *Heroines*, stories by Australian women writers published in 1991 by Penguin, is a valuable collection of 478 pages for a mere $16.95. Spender gives a useful Introduction, and there is a brief portrait and up-to-date bibliography of each writer’s work. This is one of the best and most representative anthologies of women’s writing available at present, and includes the work of writers from a range of age-groups, race, and occupations: for example, Barbara Jefferis, Ruby Langford, Finola
Moorhead, Thea Astley, Eva Johnson, Jocelynne Scutt, Elizabeth Jolley and Beth Yahp.

The final offering from UQP reviewed here is Bill Rosser's *Up Rode the Troopers: The Black Police in Queensland*, which won the inaugural 1990 RAKA Award for Koori and other Aboriginal writers. This is a story of the Native Police Force in Queensland who, led by white officers, were used in the last century to exterminate whole tribes of Aborigines. Rosser sees part of the infamous history through the eyes of "Cyclone" Jack, an Aboriginal whose grandfather, on Christmas Eve 1860, had seen the slaughter of a group of Aboriginal men, women and children by Black Police led by Lieutenant Frederick Wheeler, one of those licensed psychopaths not infrequently empowered by our society even today. Research and Rosser's own meetings with Aboriginal people in different parts of Queensland enlarge the history and set it in the context of the lives of some contemporary Aboriginal people. The judges of the RAKA Award (three men and one woman) found the book, "vivacious" and "compulsively readable." Other readers may find it too painful for reading pleasure, although it is greatly warmed by the relaxed kindliness of Rosser's narrative.