

# Press release:

2 May, 2009

## *View from the Lucky Hotel* wins National Poetry Award

“innovative poetics” — judges of the FAW Anne Elder Award

“A wonderfully fresh, subtle and endearing voice” — Helen Garner

“Droll, zestful, tender, complicated, meditative, companionable — Sandy Fitts’ poems invite the reader into *tout le monde*.” — Peter Steele

### VIEW FROM THE LUCKY HOTEL WINS ANNE ELDER AWARD

The Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) has announced that ‘View from the Lucky Hotel’ by Sandy Fitts has won the prestigious Anne Elder Award 2008 for the “best first poetry collection published in Australia in 2008.”

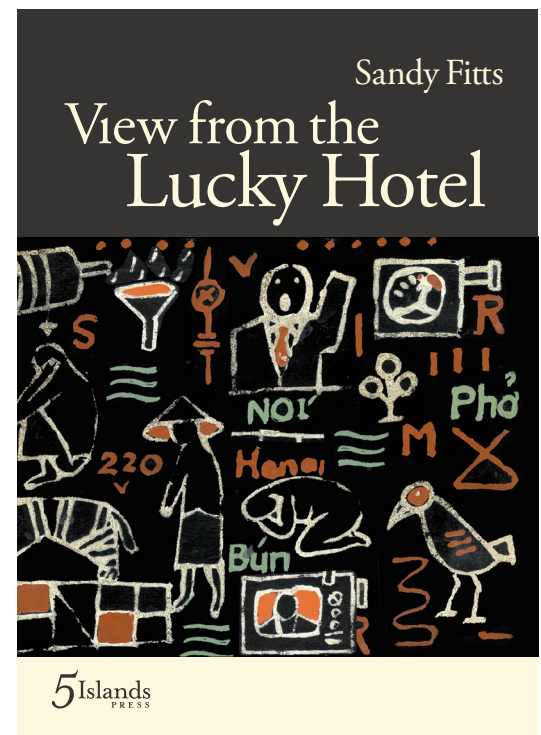
The result was announced on 1 May 2009 at the FAW National Literary Awards presentation ceremony in the setting of Ormond Hall, St. Kilda Road, Melbourne. The FAW Awards are highly competitive and attract hundreds of entries from every state of Australia.

The judges of the FAW Anne Elder Award 2008 were poets Connie Barber and Jennifer Harrison. Their report paid tribute to the book’s “innovative poetics”, and to “the literary skill and humanity of a mature intelligence.”

Versatile in form and diverse in subject matter, the poems in ‘View from the Lucky Hotel’ cover a lot of territory — central Australia, Melbourne, Berlin, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, as well as Merseyside, Surrey and Yorkshire, where Fitts lived as a child. Other poems fly in aeroplanes, ride motorbikes, or spend the day in bed.

“Droll, zestful, tender, complicated, meditative, companionable both with persons and with their things — Sandy Fitts’ poems invite the reader into *tout le monde*.” writes poet Peter Steele on the book’s cover.

About half of the poems in ‘View from the Lucky Hotel’ are located in Hanoi. When writing the book, Fitts visited Vietnam and researched over a number of years. “Closed off since the Vietnam War ended in 1975, Vietnam was beginning to open its doors to the outside world,” says Fitts, “It was early days in the meshing of communism, totalitarianism, with capitalism and consumerism. And at street level, excitement, ambivalence, and wonder.”



**Publisher:** Five Islands Press, Australia  
[www.fiveislandspress.com](http://www.fiveislandspress.com)

**Contact:** Dan Disney [dan\\_fip@hotmail.com](mailto:dan_fip@hotmail.com)  
mobile 0407 270 269

**Author information, contact, copies of book reviews:** [www.sandyfitts.com](http://www.sandyfitts.com)

# Press release:

---

The view from the Lucky Hotel is seriously kaleidoscopic. Poems visit the notorious 'Hanoi Hilton' prison. They explore the issues of war tourism in the Cu Chi tunnels. They hang out in the expatriate 'Polite Pub'. They buy a blue mop, review headgear, make friends, look at art, taste dragonfruit, sing, cry, worry, and fall off a bike.

With friend Thuy, at the Temple of Literature the poet contemplates water lilies in the scummy Well of Heavenly Clarity, while in the Hanoi Botanical Gardens, she takes note of the sign warning visitors not to bring explosives, nor defecate in a topsy-turvy way.

There is a keen eye at work here, along with the acuity to take the poem beyond the surface scene, and a voice that ranges across satire, lyric, narrative, and essay forms. "A wonderfully fresh, subtle and endearing voice," comments writer Helen Garner (book cover).

Some twenty poems in this collection have previously won individual prizes. The poem *Waiting for Goya* was awarded the esteemed 'Gwen Harwood Poetry Prize' 2007. The judges Jennifer Strauss and Mike Ladd noted that the poem is "a powerful and complex exploration of the relevance of Goya's art, sprung from 'a mad age of faith and war', to our own time as well as, through the locating of its presence in a German art gallery, to Nazi Germany. The poem's meditative quality has a dramatic and argumentative energy..." (*Waiting for Goya* also appears in 'Best Australian Poems 2008', Black Inc.)

Copies of 'View from the Lucky Hotel' are available from  
[www.fiveislandspress.com](http://www.fiveislandspress.com)

Bookshops can contact the distributor at [www.australianbookgroup.com.au](http://www.australianbookgroup.com.au)