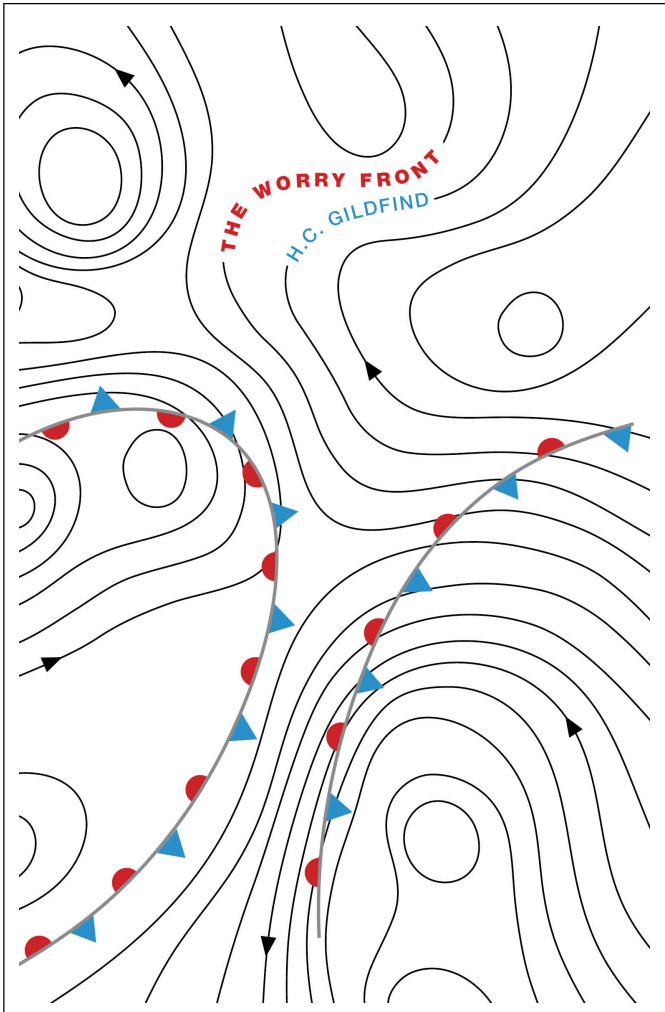




MARGARET RIVER
• PRESS •



The Worry Front

By H.C. Gildfind

SUMMARY

These unsettling short stories, which include the prize-winning novella 'Quarry', expose an anatomy of worry in its many guises—unease, fear, dread, and terror.

Through a multitude of distinct voices, H.C. Gildfind's startling tales explore the absurd, macabre, surreal—and too-real—whilst wrestling with the irrevocable acts, immutable facts, and relentless uncertainties that lie at the dark heart of every life.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

H.C. Gildfind lives in Melbourne and has published short stories, poetry, essays and book reviews in Australia and overseas. Gildfind has also researched interwar Australian literature and history, has been mentored by novelist Andrea Goldsmith, and is currently working on a novel.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

General Questions

1. How might the 'empty set' symbol, used to mark breaks throughout this collection, relate to the stories overall?
2. Which stories—or characters—provoked the strongest thoughts and feelings in you?
3. Do you think it is important to 'like' a character when reading fiction?

The Ferryman

4. What happened to the ferryman?
5. Why do you think the ferryman is—or is not—a reliable narrator?
6. How does the ferryman's final discovery affect your thoughts and feelings about him and his story?

The Worry Front

7. What is the Worry Front, and how has it impacted upon the narrator's life and death?
8. Can you relate to any of the characters, or the family dynamics, in this story?
9. How does the notion of the 'Big Bang' relate to this story?

Eat. Shit. Die.

10. Why do you think Nina can't control her eating?
11. What significance do the peripheral characters (George, Glen, Bryce and Renee) have in this story?
12. How do Leo and Nina perceive the world and each other? Does anything change for them in this story?

Gently, Gently

13. Why is the narrator painting one room yellow in this story?
14. What is the significance of the lost chicken?
15. What does this story say about gentleness—and violence—in human and animal relationships?

The Wished For

16. What sort of life has the narrator chosen? Why?
17. What are the consequences of her choice? What do you think her future holds for her?
18. What role does 'place' play in this story?

Solomon Jeremy Rupert Jones

19. Who is Wussy Pants, and what is his role in Solomon's story?
20. Who do you care most, and least, about in this story? Why?
21. What has Solomon understood by the final scene?

Morning Song

22. How do you initially react to the two women in this story? Does your perception of them change in any way?
23. What is the significance of the magpie?
24. What thoughts and feelings do the final scene provoke in you, and how does this scene affect your response to the characters and story overall?



The Broken Body

25. Where does hope, and hopelessness, come from for the narrator and peripheral characters in this story? Who has what kind of stake in creating such hope or hopelessness?
26. What does this story, and 'Eat. Shit. Die.', seem to say about the human body and medicine?

What There Is

27. What has happened to this couple?
28. What do the regular customers 'mean' to the narrator and to Mark, her partner?
29. What do the refineries mean to the narrator in this story, as compared to the narrator in 'The Broken Body'?

Adrian

30. What is the significance of the Wilde quote at the beginning of this story?
31. Whose story is this?
32. What does the cockatoo represent for different people in this story?

Quarry

33. What is the significance of the black dog in this story?
34. What is the significance of the wild dogs, and the brindle-coated dog, from Luke's past?
35. What is the significance of Luke's 'monstrousness'?
36. How might the word 'quarry' relate to Luke's story?
37. How do the opening and closing scenes speak to each other, and what do they say about Luke's story overall?

REVIEWS & ENDORSEMENTS

'Gildfind's intense, visceral, surprising stories of desire and hesitation make this a brilliant and earthy debut.'

PHILIP SALOM, award-winning poet and novelist, whose novel *Waiting* was shortlisted for the 2017 Miles Franklin Award

'Gildfind is a writer whose work pulses with life and visceral power. Rarely has the experience of the lived physical body been so eloquently pinned to the page.'

ZORA SANDERS, previous editor, *Meanjin*

'With a suggestiveness reminiscent of Woolf or Mansfield laced with the wariness of a faster, more interdependent, and less gender-scripted world, Gildfind brings a new generation's voice into Australian literature.'

NICHOLAS BIRNS, editor, *Antipodes*, New York