

ALLEN & UNWIN



# READING GROUP NOTES

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## About Marion Halligan

Marion Halligan is an award-winning novelist, essayist and short story writer. Her most recent novel, *The Fog Garden*, was shortlisted for a swag of distinguished literary prizes including the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and her previous novel, *The Golden Dress*, was shortlisted for the Dublin IMPAC Prize, and the Miles Franklin Award. She has also been awarded *The Age* Book of the Year, the ACT Book of the Year, the Nita B. Kibble prize, the Steele Rudd Award, the Braille Book of the Year, the 3M Talking Book of the Year and the Geraldine Pascall prize for critical writing. Marion Halligan's previous titles are the novels *Spider Cup*, *Lovers' Knots* and *Wishbone*; many books of essays, non-fiction and short stories, including *Collected Stories*, *Eat My Words*, *Out of the Picture* and *Cockles of the Heart*; a children's book, *The Midwife's Daughters*; and *Those Women who Go to Hotels*, co-written with Lucy Frost.

## On writing *The Point* - Marion Halligan

*The Point* began life as a lot of my novels do, expecting to be a short story. The idea came from a friend of mine, who said to me, Marion, you know, computers are the last great Faustian temptation. This idea floated around on the edges of my brain for a while, as well as on bits of paper. When I came to write what almost immediately turned out to be a novel I didn't actually use this sentence, I did not want to spell it out too clearly, but I did spend some time on Christopher Marlowe's play, *Doctor Faustus*, so that readers who were not familiar with the idea would understand what I was talking about. I often have quite erudite ideas from literature or history or the Bible in my writing but I make sure that I always explain them, not always openly or didactically, but if the reader trusts me and reads on all will be made clear.

So I had this idea of the Faustian temptation, and that computers offer the possibility of containing all knowledge, which was one of the things the devil offered Faust, in return for his immortal soul. The devil always offers amazing things in return for your soul: sex, wealth, power, knowledge. Whether he delivers is another matter. In Marlowe's plays the things he offers turn out to be all sham, they are cheap magician's tricks, noisy fireworks, sleight of hand, capering little demons; they involve a lot of slapstick comedy. And when he asks for Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, whose face launched a thousand ships—the reference is to the Trojan war and all the ships that fought in it—what he gets is a vague approximation. In the play it would have been a young beautiful boy dressed as a girl, in the novel the computer people play with the idea of her being a hologram, an image of virtual reality. At any rate she is not a real live woman he can make love to; the devil never keeps his part of the bargain. Sadly, Faustus does, and this is ironic, because he doesn't need to; God would forgive him right up to the last minute, if only he asked, but somehow he cannot.

I love these big old ideas, from the Bible, from past writers. I think they are still alive for us today.

Anyway, my imagination was playing with the idea of the Faustian temptation, and I thought of a computer programmer and a chef. At first I was going to have the chef a man, the computer person a woman, but then it somehow worked in the more traditional roles. The man wants all knowledge, the perfect understanding of all there is to be known, the woman wants the perfect dish. Both have their obsessions. What I found interesting is that the virtual thing, the

computer program, is in fact permanent, it can last forever, whereas the concrete thing, the perfect dish, is ephemeral, it lasts only a little while and has to be created again.

Jerome is a former Franciscan. I found this interesting for two reasons, he knows Latin and bookkeeping which are the perfect foundations for computer skills, and he is typical of so many men of my generation and a little younger, intelligent sensitive compassionate people who entered religious orders in their youth but did not stay there. In some hugely important ways the Church failed them.

He falls in love with Flora, a character who makes a brief appearance in an earlier novel of mine called *Spider Cup* but you don't need to have read that, everything that she does in that book is actually in *The Point*, plus more, the death of her baby. I am interested in the way such loss destroys marriages. You would think pain would bring people closer together, make them love and support one another more strongly in their sorrow, but it often doesn't happen like that. Flora leaves her husband, her job, her country, to make a new life.

Flora was meant to be the heroine of the novel, it was to be her story and Jerome's but it didn't pan out that way. Perhaps she is too damaged. Anyway, along comes Gwyneth and grabs the starring female role. I love Gwyneth, she is such a good person, and yet you would think the damage done to her could have destroyed her. She is the book's note of hope, that for somebody at least, for her and perhaps Joe, life may be good. She is in contrast to the boys with wicked hearts who seem to be mindlessly evil.

Then there is Oscar, and he again is an interesting character for me, because he represents all the young people who think they can work out their own morality, their own spirituality, that none of the efforts of centuries of thinking about these things has any relevance to them. Just as society and the Church failed people of my generation, so is—what? I don't know, I just ask the questions—something failing young people. They think they need to make up their own meanings, and in the case of Oscar and his friends it is drugs that will do it. Gwyneth takes drugs because she has had a bloody awful life and they might alleviate her pain. Clever Oscar, the brilliant hacker, and his friends think they will lead to understanding—tragically for him.

Most of these things are not spelt out in the novel; I think it is my job to suggest things, to offer questions, so other people can think about possible outcomes and answers. And it is wisdom after the event that shows me these things, at the time I am mainly writing stories about people I find fascinating, setting out on a journey whose end I don't know.

I haven't mentioned Clovis. He is a person who has behaved badly, indeed criminally, and has dropped out of society to try to understand himself. He is a homeless person; I've been surprised to find a homeless person turning up in a number of my books, there is one in *The Golden Dress*. I am also surprised at how undomestic this novel is; none of it happens in homes, except the central bit in the house in Séverac, which is not exactly a home. It is all in public, by the lake—I love it when people tell me they see the lake in Canberra with new eyes, now I have caused them to observe it—in the restaurant.

The restaurant is described at the very beginning of the book. I invented it, as the most beautiful of Marion Mahony Griffin's creations—she actually didn't get to build any of the wonderful buildings she drew on gold silk for the plans that won her husband the commission to design Canberra. I thought I was inventing it, but when I had finished the book I discovered that Marion Mahony had already drawn it, a tiny little pavilion of dotted lines and reflections, hardly

bigger than a thumbnail, easily missed on one of her grand golden silk panoramas. Writing is full of serendipitous and slightly sinister occurrences like that.

The building is shaped like a lantern, its light shines from it. Those who are outside, the dispossessed, can see in, but those inside cannot see out; they are rich and lucky, they possess material goods and are possibly possessed by them. But does it do them any good?

I find I can't leave food out of my books. I've tried sometimes but it has always turned out to be impossible. That's because it is where the real dramas of the human condition enact themselves. So when I started writing *The Point*, I thought, well, it's set in a restaurant, it will be really and thoroughly about food. It will be the whole theme and pattern of the book.

Well, it is and it isn't. Flora is obsessed with finding the perfect dish, not because she wants to eat it, she doesn't care much for eating, though she likes to drink wine, but as an idea, an act of the imagination. This obsession causes the catastrophic climax of the novel (there's also a failure of love here too). The food she cooks is amazing, rare, erudite, serious. Not much fun. Her picnic is almost bizarrely austere: parmesan cheese, bread, olive oil and pears. All perfect of course. With superb wine, on and in and with handsome plates, glasses, napkins.

Later she is cooking a banquet for the Slow Food movement, which I think is a wonderful idea, basically, although it is also a hobby of the rich, and that is something to be thought of, not rejected, but considered. I do feel there is something a bit immoral about too much attention paid to food. Enough, yes, it is important to have respect. But obsession is another matter. And I would much rather write a novel where these things are to be thought about as the preoccupations of my characters than construct some sort of serious essay balancing the whys and wherefores.

A lot of the food is ambiguous. It comes out of the garbage. It's the rejects of rich diners' plates. When the vagrant Clovis and the parole-breaker Gwyneth are eating it, she says it tastes much nicer in this discarded state than in the restaurant. No, says Clovis, it doesn't, and they have an argument, he trying to tell her that she only thinks it does, because she is happier here, it is actually much more delicious hot and fresh and on a plate, not mishmashed and cold. But she can't listen to what he is saying. Finally he tells her she is proof of the Bible's statement: 'better a dinner of herbs where love is . . .'; he can't quite remember the whole quotation.

That is I think one of the most significant moments in the book. *Better a dinner of herbs where love is . . .* It's what we all in our hearts know. That the simplest of food with people we love will give us more pleasure than the most glamorous of meals where love isn't. Of course sometimes it is nice to have love *and* glamour, but only sometimes.

It took me a long time to write this book, at least seven years. Partly because I took a year and a bit off in the middle to write *The Fog Garden*. That turned up demanding to be written when my husband died. But *The Point* was there, all through that, and it was a book that needed a lot of time, just thinking about it. I do odd bits of research at the National Library, I cut out useful clippings from newspapers—on for instance the Slow Food movement, and the willow sculpture—I go and look at things, I kept hanging round the lake and observing its colours, I walked where Clovis and Gwyneth would have gone for their picnic. But often I think it is less that I do research than that things turn up which I realise are just what I want. Everything that happens to me, that I read, see, think, hear, is likely to turn up in a novel, because I write about the world we live in now. (I sometimes think my whole life should be a tax deduction.) It is a

fluid process. A lot of it is not getting up when I wake up, lying in bed very cosy under the doona and thinking about what is going on, letting my imagination take me places. Listening to the book; Gwyneth taking over Flora's expected role as heroine, for instance. A book like this has been lived with and in for a long time, it has its own dynamic, it has grown and taken on its own life.

I liked writing Jerome's voice, the diary entries; readers will notice that when I write as myself it is in a much more chatty voice, so I really enjoyed doing the more formal and even sometimes slightly pompous voice of Jerome. He uses a lot more big and Latinate words than I would ever let myself, I am rather Anglo-Saxon in my vocabulary preferences. And though I sometimes write long sentences, they are not usually convoluted.

I am superstitious of talking too much about what I do, I prefer doing it rather than thinking about it. If I think too hard I might lose the knack.

## Reviews

### The Sunday Tasmanian

Canberra is perhaps not usually thought of as a stand-alone character in a novel. But in Marion Halligan's *The Point*, the nation's capital imposes itself easily on us. Halligan invites us to The Point, an imaginary Canberra restaurant. Its chef, Flora Mount, creates perfect food. Exquisite as her culinary achievements are, we soon discover that they are a foil for her own uncertainties. Food therefore becomes a metaphor for a troubled life and, by association, a troubled city.

... Besides *The Point* having a narrative infrastructure about Canberra as a place, the story is in part an intensely close study of Flora Mount. She is no ordinary cook. Flora's food, so Halligan writes, 'is an idea, carefully thought out before it becomes flesh on a plate.' We are served a multi-layered story as a result. This is largely achieved through the unobtrusive way Halligan introduces her secondary characters. Chief among these is Jerome Glacy ... 'I enjoyed writing about Jerome the most. I wrote in his voice. I have never written previously in a slightly more formal way. This was the case with Jerome. He uses a more ornate vocabulary. Only in rare moments do we see how others view him.'

Along with Halligan exploring the lives of Flora and Jerome, we are reminded that Canberra—the shining, planned and well-heeled city envisioned by the famous architects Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin—is also a place of shattered dreams. This reality gave Halligan ample opportunity to broaden her thematic concerns. 'I like the idea of subplots. I am passionate about this novel as a form as I think it can explore ideas relevant to our lives ... with *The Point*, although some of it is set in the past, I think novels should be about living now!'

This is largely presented through Halligan's representation of city homelessness. We are drawn, in counterpoint, from the lavish tastes and expense accounts of the guests at Flora's restaurant, to an under-class of vagrants whose dining comes from waste bins.

This is a fine contemporary novel. Halligan asks us to simply look at life about us. It is not always as it seems. That's the point of this rewarding and unsettling story.

## Canberra Times

...In keeping with the book's multi-perspectival spirit, Halligan employs several voices to convey her story. Initially, an omnipotent narrator asks us to 'imagine' the restaurant, to 'stand outside ... and look to the right' to see the National Library and on 'the left ... the High Court and the National Gallery'. Through this voice, Halligan places readers in the landscape and locality, exhibiting the painterly skills evident in previous books, including *Spider Cup*. Subsequently, a more conventional third-person narrative allows readers inside the numerous characters' heads, including those of Elinor Spenser and Flora Mount, whom readers may recognise from *Spider Cup*. Chapters from Jerome's diary—written as 'therapy' after the events in the book have taken place—are interwoven with the panoramic third-perspective.

If this sounds confusing, that may be because it is. Like its predecessor, *The Fog Garden*, *The Point* suffers from some structural problems, including a seemingly endless deferment of central plot points. Indeed, it sometimes seems as if *The Point* is either ironically or inaptly named, given that Halligan takes so long to get to it.

Yet, the unconventional tone and timing of the novel also bespeak the author's boldness and willingness to take risks. As such, these aspects are, in a sense, commendable. It seems Halligan is determined to stretch readers' minds, and certainly her own lively intelligence is evident in the provision of fascinating snippets of information, including, for instance, the reason why the pasta sauce *puttanesca* is named as such. In addition, Halligan's decision to write in a layered, multidimensional fashion suggests an honouring of her readers' intellectual capacities.

Unfortunately, however, while stretching readers' minds, Halligan also risks stretching their patience. Several of the tangents and ruminations reflect the undisciplined nature of some of the writing. Elinor's brief trip to France, for instance, has little to do with the main story at hand and merely seems self-indulgent on the author's part. Thus, while the reader may appreciate the metaphors, poetry and wordsmithiness of this characteristically literary novel, they may also find themselves longing for the crisp, illuminating prose of a Helen Garner or an Elizabeth Jolley.

Moreover, at times Halligan seems to have been striving for the kind of writing equivalent of the Slow Food movement that Flora and Elinor discuss in the book. Consequently, her recording of the philosophically inclined conversations that take place between several of her characters makes for some rather trying reading. The spark of vivid conversation is evident in some of the discussions—for instance, in those between Clovis and Jerome. Mostly, though, Halligan comes across as assuming, rather patronizingly, that these ramblings are more interesting than they are. The characters too are rather hit and miss. For instance, while Halligan's depiction of Gwyneth, a methadone addict and runaway, is rather clichéd, Clovis, an ex-lawyer and erudite thinker, is cleverly constructed and rather compelling, as is the gentle and likable Jerome. And in contrast to the almost palpably realized Elinor, Flora seems rather intangible ... although the author tends to over-explore some metaphors—for instance, sight and myopia—her highlighting of others, including the porous boundaries between inside and out and her awareness of the fictiveness of fiction exhibit the pleasing intricacy of her writing.

Above all, however, *The Point* is memorable for its portrayal of a wide range of Canberrans going about their parallel and imbricated lives in a city from which their creator derives considerable inspiration.

## Australian Book Review

Marion Halligan's latest novel should be a success. It is a continuation and concentration of themes, characters and settings that have consistently engaged her in a considerable body of work. *The Point* is full of Halligan favourites: food, art, love, literature, hubris, Canberra, Séverac and the Spensers. It is a novel with currency, exploring the IT industry, the business of food and the perceived distance between those with and those without. Halligan has a reputation as an intense and original writer, but *The Point* is a disappointing novel ...

Like many of Halligan's works, *The Point* is a busy novel ... The novel is part third-person narrative and part Jerome's diary, as he reflects on the unfolding events. Halligan is fond of brazen coincidence in fiction, and *The Point* is no exception. Added to this, quite a few of the characters—Flora, Elinor, Ivan, Blanche and Marie Claire—come with an existing past and a continuing story from Halligan's novel *Spider Cup* (1990).

... In the last chapters, the consequences of hubris and the rewards of modesty are meted out. Those who believed they could attain perfection, be it in food, knowledge or experience, end up dead or ruined. Those who suffered and served are rewarded with contentment and a rosy, appropriately humble future.

The disappointment of this work is the writing. Jerome is a self-absorbed and facetious character whose reflections aren't scintillating. As a diary, it carries too much of the narrative, and Jerome, who is 'old and tired and worn and forgetful', has an implausibly good memory for long and complex conversations. The dialogue, particularly from the younger characters, is unconvincing. Frequent and frustrating are syntactical muddles such as 'Jerome hadn't talked to her since acrimoniously she left him—no, this was the acrimony, she had gone with he thought a vulgar stupid misprising of what love was, but also with a careless sort of taking-and-leaving indifferent good humour that had enraged him.'

Halligan has described herself as enjoying a 'bowerbird cleverness, a kind of sly sharpness in the collection of matter', the proud display of which is a regular feature of her novels. Many of the characters in *The Point* share her bowerbird tendencies, and the novel is laden with exotic words, quotations, descriptions of visual art and literary and religious characters. Whilst some elucidation is helpful, too often I felt I was reading an idiosyncratic encyclopedia, with entries such as Key West (1. Lime Pie 2. Florida 3. Wallace Stevens), methadone, French dining, pelicans and St Jerome. These frequent explanations are overt and overly detailed, keeping the reader at arm's length from the characters and the plot.

Eudora Welty said of writing fiction: 'You must know all, then not tell it all, or not tell too much at once: simply the right thing at the right moment.' This authorial confidence, which Halligan demonstrated in *The Golden Dress*, is lacking in *The Point*. Too many characters feel guessed at rather than known, and there is a straining to tell too much all at once, rendering Halligan's latest work worthy, but hard to recommend.

## The Sydney Morning Herald

... *The Point* self-consciously engages with the themes of destruction and loss, both personal and cultural, and the individual's responses to them. Despite the redemptive possibilities offered by relationships and creative work—whether the art of willow sculpture or cooking or writing—these remain fragile solutions in a world where the threat of

losing everything is very real. In this context, even the simple image of a boy crossing a park with a baseball bat takes on a sinister resonance, and all of the characters are forced to face loss, a fall from grace, or an act of violence by the novel's end. Although the perpetrators of such violence are undeveloped, recalling the vice figures of medieval morality plays, the novel attributes contemporary culture's destructiveness to the divorce of language from meaning and of culture from its past . . .

Where the word evil has lost its connection with cultural history, evil itself flourishes, unrecognised and unchecked by reason, religion or shared cultural values. At first this seems a conservative and nostalgic view, which divides its characters according to their age. The middle-aged are informed by a rich set of cultural referents and become the victims of the new culture of mindless violence. The young, uneducated and cut adrift from values of the past, perpetrate the violence that threatens the cultural order represented by the old. This separation makes both groups seem slightly unconvincing—the old in the range and depth of their cultural experience; and the young delineated through their appearances and actions, rather than through any sense of their interior lives.

Halligan is careful not to make her distinctions too bluntly. She introduces counter-examples, such as the older pedophile Clay Brendt, and the young students who perform a dazzling contemporary version of *Dr Faustus*. But most significantly, she links her own work's concerns with loss, age and the predatory child with those of *King Lear*. This connects the novel's unease with contemporary culture with a history of such critiques. Thus it reinforces the focus on retaining an informed sense of the past as a way of negotiating the problems of the present.

However, there is still a strong sense that such frames of reference are under threat in a brave new world. This apprehension of fragility and loss is the novel's strength, and saves its middle-class focus from complacency. While reading it, I found myself acting with more care. It might be old-fashioned in pitting the values of the past against a contemporary world, but it convincingly asserts that the values it associates with the past—the serious work of engaging with love, death, pain and art—are worth keeping.

### Good Reading

... *The Point* comes into focus gradually. In the beginning its shapes and colours are slightly fuzzy, the characters at a distance, the narrative unclear. Then gradually, the perspective sharpens, the people become real and the plot takes unexpectedly violent twists.

It's always dangerous to say what a novel is 'about', but it seems to me that the point of *The Point* is lack of safety. While it is primarily a novel of ideas, Marion Halligan has expressed them like a true novelist, forcing her readers to feel as well as think.

### Canberra Times

In a novel by Marion Halligan you cannot be sure of finding sentences that follow rules of grammar. There might be clauses posing as complete constructions or no punctuation where you'd expect to find it. But her subversions are intentional and you can be sure of this: she wants to get it right—some moments of epiphany; some beautiful, silken phrasing; images to place forever against a landscape seen afresh; silence where there should be no sound. And woven through that, people and ideas—in other words, the stuff of life, altered, formed in the pursuit of art.



*The Point* is Halligan's new book, set in Canberra in which Flora Mount holds careful court in a glass restaurant by the lake, making food that feeds the senses and the intellect. Inside the restaurant, and outside it, the stories of the self-possessed and dispossessed mingle. Halligan had conceived the glass restaurant as the sort of thing that Marion Mahony Griffin would have drawn, only to find that such a drawing existed, a deco glass structure that now graces the cover of *The Point*. To invent something that already exists is one of the subtle forces at work in the writing of novels. As is the sense of place.

The capturing of Canberra in fiction, the making of it so that it is true, is something close to Halligan's heart. A society needs novelists to give a sense of place, of recognition, she says. Dickens, Austen, Hardy absolutely had a sense of the places they wrote of. Even the globalised novel nearly always has at its heart a specific place. It is very difficult when you live in this country to be taken seriously, says Halligan. A book set in New York, or London or Paris has a ready-made credibility. But readers don't perceive us as that kind of society. The Australian authors who have been widely accepted tend to be writing about a kind of Australia best described as colonial Australia. The cosmopolitan city is not seen as distinctly Australian. They want us to be other, Tasmanian. 'There is a sense in which it is not Canberra's or Australia's role to be sophisticated. Who in Australia is writing what it is to live in Australia? Hardly anyone. There are books that have truths about Australia but they might be set in the past.' Halligan reflects that Elizabeth Jolley did write about today's Australia, and Thea Astley, but it is some time since we had a book from them. Jessica Anderson did it well, she thinks. But novelists have given over this territory to memoirists, perhaps because it is harder to write as fiction.










...Halligan believes a writer's job is to make readers ask questions, rather than simply giving them answers ...

In the book, says Halligan, Clovis thinks the youths (who patrol with a baseball bat or casually pop pills at Manuka cafes) have cruel hearts, but the question remains: how does a heart become cruel? Certainly the young in *The Point* do not see themselves as evil. At the funeral they eulogise their friend. It is part performance, part transcendence. The desire to be seen as good is very powerful. You can construct whole philosophies to vindicate action. Gwyneth is the character who (if one accepts that hard experience hardens) ought to have a cruel heart but her heart is pure, good, says Halligan. She thinks part of the growth of a cruel heart must be parental—parents who organise the system to their own purpose. There is a sense of rich, prosperous parental neglect, she says. This gives rise about what is neglect, what is caring. Does a lawyer father defending his son against charges, saving the son and the family from shame, preventing the son from paying for a crime, constitute protection?

Oscar and his friends are 'moderately amoral, they have clear perceptions, they are inventing a kind of religion,' says Halligan. The idea of the portal is very strong—they are interested in where experimentation will take them. They see themselves involved in something more noble, questing. The question of how shall we live arises again and again. These kids are doing what was done in the '60s but there are differences, says Halligan. Drugs, computers, affluence, information, hubris? Is it possible for us to understand this? We don't speak the same language any more, she adds. In a previous time if someone said 'job' or 'the temptation of Christ', many people would have understood. 'It was a way of talking, a common language, we had religion, music.' Even across religions there were commonalities—the Old Testament, the idea of a prophet, good and evil, the idea that they were in conflict with another. The Faustian temptation ...

Paradoxically, to live a good life is sometimes not the same as being good. Being good might also be narrow-minded and unimaginative. And it is the imagination that Halligan sees as vital to the well-being of people, and of nations ...

## Some suggested points for discussion

-  Marion Halligan says, 'I do think food is immensely important in people's lives, and for me as a novelist it is often a way of developing plot, character, theme—the whole shape of the book'. How does Halligan do this in *The Point*? Discuss how food is symbolic in this novel and what themes it highlights.
-  Discuss Halligan's evocation of place in the novel.
-  Do you think there are 'good' and 'evil' characters within the novel and, if so, what does this reflect about Halligan's concepts of such? Or do you think we need to separate the ideas in the novel from Halligan's own? Discuss various other binary oppositions within the novel such as 'age' and 'youth'. What are your own ideas about such oppositions?
-  Describe Halligan's characterisation in this novel. What characters were particularly well-realised? Did you agree with one reviewer who said many characters 'remain little more than names'? Do you think it's necessary for all subsidiary characters to be three-dimensional?
-  What is the significance of the names of Clovis and Gwyneth, and of Gwyneth's imaginary child?
-  Discuss the conversations of Clovis and Jerome about wearing glasses, and the way this theme threads through the book.
-  A reviewer said that as we read this novel we have to ponder what makes a failure: 'Failure to live up to potential? Failure to cope? Failure to let someone love us? Failure to mute obsession?' Do you agree? Has it made you re-evaluate your own thoughts about what makes a failure or success?
-  Discuss the Bogong moths.
-  What does *The Point* illuminate about the way our appetites and desires irrevocably shape the world?

## Further reading

*Spider Cup* and *The Fog Garden* by Marion Halligan

*The Flight from the Enchanter* by Iris Murdoch

*Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe

*Thea Astley: Collected Stories* by Thea Astley

*Tender at the Bone* by Ruth Reichl

*Lovesong* and *The Orchard Thieves* by Elizabeth Jolley

*The House at Evelyn's Pond* by Wendy Orr

Alec Hope's *Faustus*, in *Selected Poems* (Angus & Robertson, 1992)

*Possession* by A.S. Byatt