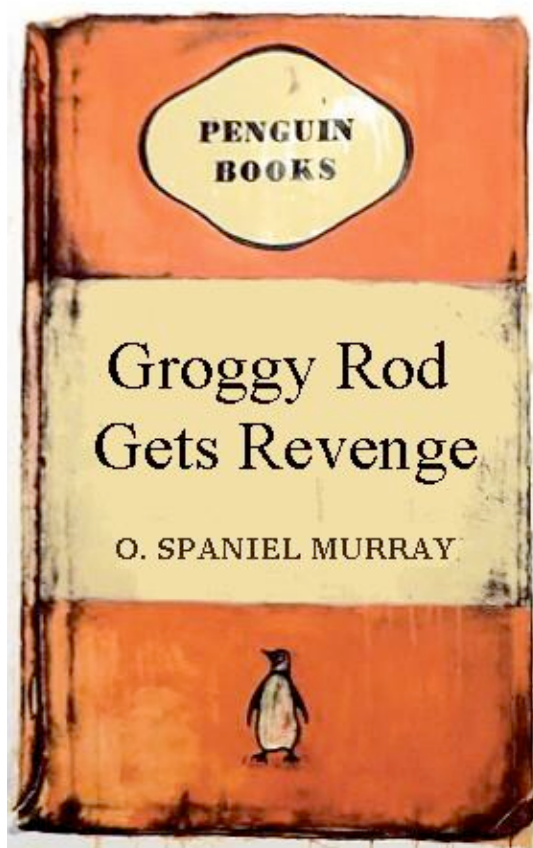


CATALOGUE



A READER'S GUIDE TO
THE SHORT STORIES OF
O. SPANIEL MURRAY

1832 - 2014

ABOUT

O. Spaniel Murray is the literary name of P. Beagle Darling which is the stage name of someone who'd rather not be associated with this type of low-brow writing. He - Murray - took up the short story after losing the love of his life in a freak combine harvester accident. Since then, he has single-handedly pioneered a unique regional style sometimes called 'Yackandanda Steampunk.' About this he says:

"Yackandanda Steampunk is different to most types of steampunk. It has lots of yack, quite a bit of danda, very little steam and virtually no punk."

Moreover, the author has long made his home in his birthplace, Elegant Ridge, three or four highways from Yackandanda, at least.

It is, nevertheless, a recognizable thing, full of adjectival aplomb, raucous grammatical twistings, majestic daffodils rocking in the dawn, bold juxtapositions and characters with floridly unlikely handles. The style owes much to Murray's experience teaching C. J. Dennis to newly arrived Latvians during the dim days of the Cold War.

In the 1980s Murray got in at the ground floor of a reverse engineered affirmative action scheme whereby - as a white, Anglo-Saxon male - the Commonwealth paid him not to write short stories. During a particularly rich period between 1988 and 1994 he didn't write dozens of short stories and completely neglected to enter dozens of local and national writing competitions. At one point he was the highest paid non-writer outside of the metropolitan districts in the entire country.

To the untrained eye the author looks a bit like Dr R. Blackhirst, a resident of Central Victoria.

TITLES NEWLY RELEASED

New work by Mr Murray. Still forging new directions in offbeat short rural fiction, the author shows yet again that he is intent to apply his distinctive style to increasingly obscure subject-matter.

The Drive-Thru Monstrosity

A fast food restaurant sends a small town into paroxysms of cultural outrage when it sponsors a surrealist sculptural installation near its drive thru.

The Troglodyte of Foon

The narrator relates the tragic tale of Trevor Bishop, the Troglodyte of Foon, who reverts to life as a caveman after being retrenched from a famous pie factory.

Zarathustra's Other Sprechen

The true story of how Friedrich Nietzsche was exposed as a fraud.

Villa Cuddlesthorpe

A short history of an eccentric architectural masterpiece.

Spartan Loons

Appalled by the in-roads of modernism, a group of renegade poets relocate to post-war Japan.

Pharaoh's Rustic Queen

Our narrator is taken to the place where a local Egyptian cult buried their "Queen" in the late 1920s.

The Flatulent Barrister

Annals of irony in the legal life of Elegant Ridge.

The Spiffing Hamster

The ennui of fly-in-fly-out workers.

TITLES IN PRINT

The following are the current titles in Mr Murray's active oeuvre. The list includes some of his most popular tales. Readers should be able to find any of these titles in reputable book shops and selected 711 stores.

The Wager of Ivy's Rump

The whole of Ivy's Rump, a dusty gold town in southern Australia, is wagered on a skinny pugilist from Nottingham.

The Ballad of Bashful Newman

The narrator, resident in a group house, recalls a visit by a youthful balladeer.

Mikhail of the Lindemanns

Mikhail, a physics genius 50 years ahead of his time, has his scientific spirit crushed because he parts his hair the wrong way.

Redbeard's Baked Delights

The ordeals of cleaning a traditional Scottish oven.

The Fable of the Ridiculous Prince

The narrator visits a friend and his wife who both swear that the old man dying in the next room is Alistair Crowley.

Honey Time

Tales of the famous beekeepers of the Blue Ridge hills.

Tobogan Flapsack Changes His Name

To the despair of his editor, fiction writer Spindles O'Malley, falls in love with names.

Windemere's Paperback Saloon

The narrator remembers the golden age of Melbourne's bookstores.

Insect Blue Enigma

A chronicle of the rancorous archaeological speculations that follow the discovery of an old blue automobile sometime in the remote future.

Creamy Bunyip Soup

The narrator relates the mysterious fate of an old school friend.

Forget the Aching Dream

The narrator recounts the last few minutes of the life of Bob Dylan.

The Cantankerous Angler

The narrator relates encounters with a mean-tempered angler who has an unaccountable detestation of fish.

Nullabor Medina

The eccentric explorer, Percy Giles, discovers a lost Muslim kingdom in the middle of the Nullabor.

The Declaration of Banning Flats

In a bid to save their farm the Farley family declare war on the Bank of Restless Pleasure.

Filthy Cobalt

The story of an outback landscape painter who declares war on the national art mafia.

The Origins of the Elvis Cult

A rogue professor in some distant age ventures the bold hypothesis that Elvis was not omnipresent.

Seasons of Lust

Our heroine has her first orgasm at the age of sixty-three.

The Giotto Bird

Our hero makes a scientific discovery but has trouble publishing.

The Proverb Masters

An account of attempts to pin-point the where and when of an old breed of amateur sages.

Mad Cumulus Agenda

Eulogy to a great weather forecaster driven mad by jealousy and obsessive attention to his daily readings.

New Boots

The narrator recounts a visit to a museum dedicated to famous fatalities in Australian Rules football.

Feral Wanda

The legend of the dog woman of Woogly Peak.

The Gorgeous Randy Shuffle

Two English monks arrive at a monastery in the grip of a contagion induced by the sight of a drop of water in a primitive microscope.

Cody & The Tiresome Drover

A tale of cows, market forces and mental health.

The Flying Carolingean Brothers

The tragic tale of an unsung hero in early Australian aviation.

The Guildford Banjo Jamboree

A banjo virtuoso cuts off two of his plucking fingers in an accident but pioneers the three-finger roll to whoop his rival at a famous jamboree.

TITLES OUT OF PRINT

There are, as of this date, many titles by O. Spaniel Murray that have appeared in printed form and then disappeared, never to be seen again. Readers can sometimes locate these in secondhand book outlets, but they are officially classified as out of print. Some of these titles are regarded as rare and valuable by collectors and enthusiasts.

Mendred Wendy in the Hazestacks

Our heroine, a farm-hand, blossoms in the wonder of her days but loses the knack of conversing with her four-legged friends.

Drama At Gnostic Leap

A small town theatre company put on a production of Oedipus the King at a natural open air amphitheatre at Gnostic Leap.

The Mifunga Factor

The secrets of a Kenyan long distance runner.

Augmented Thursday

After discovering an anomaly in the Earth's chronometers authorities decide to add an extra three hours to an otherwise ordinary Thursday.

The Bilooga Himbo

The town of Bilooga is famous for its good-looking but brainless young men.

A Better Heaven

After the sudden death of Monsignor Fosby it is revealed that he and a group of parishioners had planned to use St. Caldwell's cathedral as a launching pad for a flight into outer space where they hoped to rendezvous with Jesus.

Lumpy Reeba Makes a Gold Caboose

Our hero retreats into fantasy in order to transmute the taunts of his bully siblings.

Document Fever

The tale of a particularly spiteful divorce.

The Millhouse Effect

Our drug dealer, Larry, details his theory that President Nixon was assassinated while opening a Chicago land-fill project.

There Goes The Bitter Wind

A testament to the people and architecture of a hidden suburb.

The Archetypal Trifle

The narrator sings ecstatic praises of his Auntie Irene's trifle.

Bogan Teepee Wars

When the Clegg family buy a teepee on eBay their next door rivals the Googers buy one of their own and urban warfare breaks out between their respective backyards.

Toadziller Spoons With Paris Hilton

A group of old friends meet to discuss photos of their schoolyard enemy spooning Paris Hilton.

TITLES KNOWN TO BE IN PRIVATE CIRCULATION

It has long been the author's habit to spit out a few copies of a random tale - a print run of five or six - and hand them out among comrades, cousins and near-by literati. Such titles are here classified as 'known to be in private circulation'. They have never been enjoyed freely by general readers.

Adrift in the Coffin Lobby

The narrator gives an insider's view of the funeral industry.

The Fat Man's Taxi

Confessions of a road-sign maintenance worker.

The Six Species of Drivel

All six species identified.

Sturgeon's Love Nest

An account of how a modern Casanova's all-electric high-tech babe-lair finally succumbed to white ants.

Dead-legs Bill Hurtles to Tomorrow

Wheel-chair ridden Bill McGill claims to have a time machine in his woolshed.

The Hundred Dickhead Spring

The narrator relates a springtime infested with fools and knaves.

The Broken Heart That Went South

The story of a poet who sets out wandering after misunderstanding the lady of his dreams.

The Nine-Sided Thesaurus

At the parting of their ways, our heroes search for words.

The Barrimore Pig Dash

The narrator relates something of the history of the town of Barrimore and its dangerous annual custom of racing local youths against huge, terrified porkers.

The Shapeless Pleasure Cast

The story of a useless man in a toy shop.

The Blessed Triangle

The narrator takes a personal view of the intrigues of contending cosmologies among the ancients.

Resident Hope

The hero, Patrick, a mining employee, daydreams on the slow train home.

Hail on Christmas Day

The misdeeds of an anti-Santa.

Melancholy Weighbridge Rag

An encounter with a stranger at a weighbridge in the middle of the night gives the narrator a different perspective on life.

The Killjoy That Killed Joy

A sour apparition from the State Government Land Development Council turns a small rural town into a pit of misery.

The Energy Store

An experimental novella about growing up in the Cold War. The author's most unpublishable work.

TITLES RUMORED TO EXIST

In interviews, intimations and correspondence, the author has mentioned or alluded to many stories which are otherwise unknown. There are also rumors among fans of other stories, real or imaginary. The author steadfastly refuses to confirm or deny the existence of stories in this category.

The Vampire Tattoo

The hero gets a vampire tattoo after the football Grand Final but on a trip to Romania is chased by a gang of vampire hunters.

Blue Volumes of Yore

The story of a room full of old books.

That Thoroughly Primrose Refrain

A steampunk mystery.

The Geek from Trickledown Creek

Our hero is the first person in town to install Windows 95.

The Blossoms of Mab

When Death came to Saggytown in pursuit of Lollard Grills.

A Cordial Called Raspberry Forgiveness

The narrator recalls how his grandmother taught him and his siblings the virtues of forgiveness with a glass of raspberry cordial.

Groggy Rod Gets Revenge

Under the weather, our hero inadvertently finds vengeance on an old foe.

Good Riddance to the Frisbee Generation

The narrator relates natural attrition in a government office.

Tomb of Red Tears

The narrator visits the tomb where the lover of a Moghul prince was locked up alive.

Henry Corbin's Cat

Henry's cat, Swedenborg, leads him into the mundus imaginalis among the side-streets of Istanbul.

Angus Dudley's Omnibus of Yabby Care

Angus Dudley spends 40 years writing the definitive volume on keeping yabbies.

A Bad Day at Orange

A gambler's lament.

Autumn's Share

A carload of youths go lesbian spotting on a bored Friday autumn night in trendy Marble Creek.

The Magic Olive Grove

When an old sheep farmer plants an olive grove to cash in on a new market he finds he can commune with (but not quite comprehend) the ghosts of ancient Greek philosophers.

Eight Tigers Late

Our hero encounters the Hidden Imam in a cheap hotel in Lucknow.

Dimbooni Sutra

A Hindu guru sets up an ashram just out of sunny Dimboon.

Picnic at Elegant Ridge

The mysterious disappearance of a group of young girls from the Elegant Ridge Virgin's Picnic of 1894.

The Gurgling Factory

A lonely man's obsession with tropical fish.

Bungle Street

The narrator wonders if he has moved into the wrong neighborhood.

The Loose-fitting Thingamajig

Our hero, a backyard inventor, invents the most useful gadget of all time but can't decide what to call it.

Gun John Doogies

The story of the dullest man in the southern hemisphere.

The Snorkling Hendersons

Behind the scenes of an iconic TV family.

Carnival Tonic

The hero wakes up dressed as a clown and no one notices.

Carefree Jill Goes Ballooning Again

Our heroine unfolds the topography of an almost fictional landscape from her new balloon.

TITLES ONLY KNOWN FROM PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

According to one theory Murray's stories are first and foremost aural constructions, made for voice. There are a group of tales known from radio and live performances but which have not, as yet, appeared in a printed format.

Stooges Breakfast (Dicky Serenade)

The narrator's efforts to deal with the morning after a one night stand are punctuated by black-and-white reruns of the Three Stooges on Sunday morning TV.

The Truncated Blister

Lovelorn Wally Trebble tries to walk from Kuala Lumpur back to Brisbane.

Milk Town Dew

A lilting invocation of dawn in a small, south Gippsland dairy farming town.

I Ching Recitation Sunday

Our heroes consult the ancient Chinese oracle and discover the problem of interpretation.

Blue Rings of Kool

A tale of burglary and exotic cigarettes.

Feral Wanda

The legend of the dog woman of Woogly Peak.

The Martyrdom of St Curly Austwich

A young boy escapes his backyard on a magic carpet.

RANK APOCRYPHA

For many years there has been a small, persistent industry of O. Spaniel Murray imitators such that there is today a corpus of apocrypha, bogus tales circulating under the Murray name. The following are some of the tales most commonly attributed but which are not, in fact, by he. In some cases, though, he is on record as saying he wishes he had written them and so claims them anyway. And in other cases, it must be confessed, there are tales he did write but which he now says he didn't, for reasons that are usually pretty obvious once you read the story in question.

The Swamp Hypothesis

The narrator gives a garbled account of Darwin's new theory about the origins of life.

The Case of Sally Longsport

The infamous murder of a real estate graduate who knocked on the wrong door.

Grisly Eleven AM

A series of characters recount the worst mornings of their lives.

Mrs Hooner's Breast Implants

An ode to adolescent obsession and cosmetic surgery.

On the Big Green Trailer

Car-watching in downtown Coonawillabran.

The Ridiculous Murray Kid

The narrator recalls the antics of a young boy named O. Spaniel Murray.

Remnants of Blue Tuesday

An old painter, on his death bed, remembers one Tuesday decades before when he discovered the colour blue.

The Ugly Pill

A mad scientist threatens to unleash a pill that makes women look like goannas.

POETRY

*On occasion, Mr Murray has been known to burst into verse.
There are currently two known collections of poesy.*

Saucy Meander Blues

Selected poems, volume one.

Big Titty Showdown

Selected poems, volume two.

NON FICTION

A Visitor's Guide to Elegant Ridge

Historic sites, all the best places to eat, and the definitive account of local slang.

Proverbs of Long Tomorrow

A collection of proverbs from the lonely river towns.

FORTHCOMING TITLES

The author is nothing if not prolific. He pumps out short stories on a whim. There are numerous tales still in long hand but soon to be sent to the printers.

Fascinations of Apparel

The history of the Cricket Club of the town of Voltaire's long search for a viable uniform.

Thailand Junket

Back in the heydays a rural businessman gets a free trip to Bangkok.

Serendipity Jujube

The narrator distributes his short stories by shop dropping, leaving them in the lap of the gods.

Quintessence

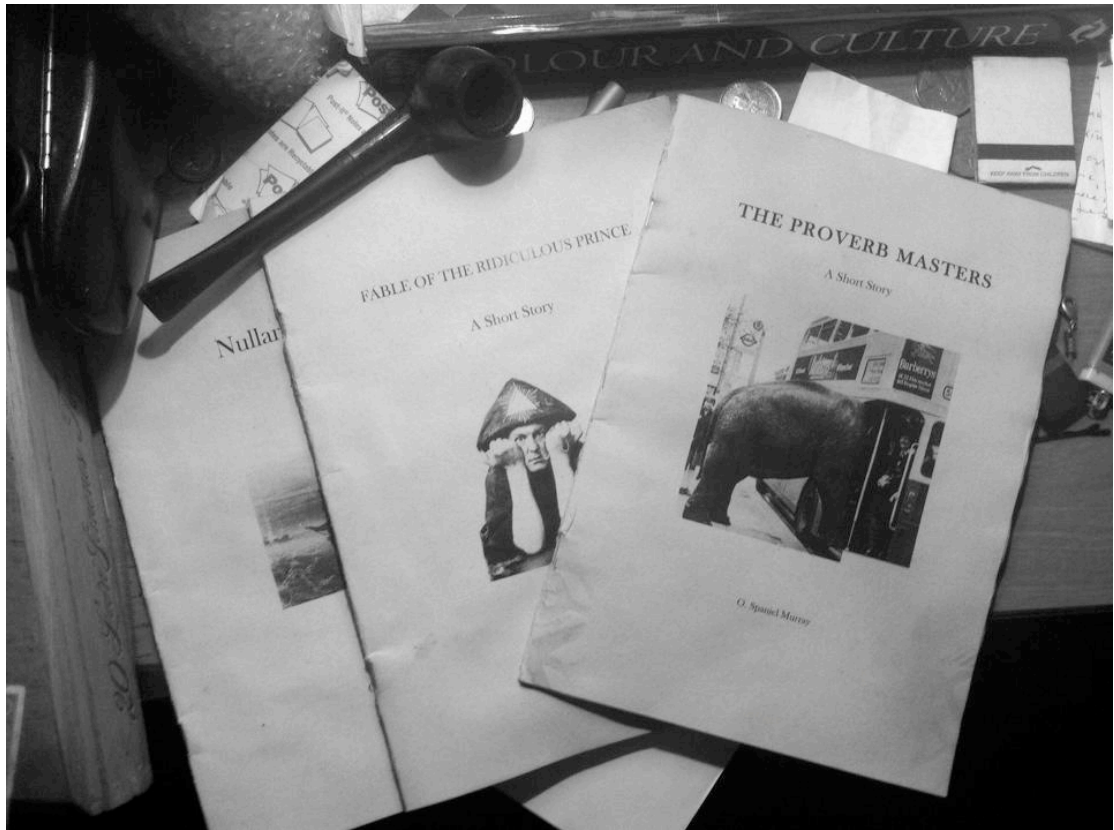
A stranger leaves a mysterious ring at a homestead and it causes consternation in the town of Quintessence.

Many Pashmeena

Our intrepid heroes try to catch a rickshaw to the spice market in Old Delhi.

Daughters of the Icefall

Two sisters close up a corner shop in Heretic River in 1948 and it is still there intact in 1975.



SHORT STORIES IN THE MAIL

Your Hard Copy Literary Alternative



Short Stories in the Mail is a simple low tech subscription service. Avid readers subscribe to the service and from time to time they receive free short stories - in an attractive, hand-aged hard-copy booklet format - by the celebrated doyen of slightly weird Australian rural short fiction, O. Spaniel Murray.

Sometimes, avid readers don't even have to subscribe! - Mr Murray will simply start mailing them out stories come-what-may. This is an artistic strategy on his part. The objective is to put the author's tales - a necessarily subversive literature - on the coffee tables of discerning lower middle-class homes across the length and breadth of the land. Really avid readers can collect the whole series.

The stories are occasional, free, dotted with unlikely characters with silly names, non-violent and largely of whimsical intent. Very few animals were harmed in the production of this literature.

Why not let the stories of Mr Murray be a talking point at your next soiree?

SELECTED FAN MAIL

Dear O. Spaniel,

I have never been to Australia and now that I've read your stories I never want to. What a horrible place. It is full of wombats and zinc miners with peculiar names. We have a word for that here in Detroit:

Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoniosis. You should move. Your stories would be much more interesting if they were set somewhere with a decent crime rate. It would also help if you included some lesbian scenes.

Signed

Maximus

Dear O.,

My copy of Short Stories in the Mail arrived today but I think I must have misunderstood. I thought "short stories" was code for something else.

Instead, it really was a short story and frankly I didn't get it. It was sort of weird. Do you know anyone who supplies "short stories" - you know what I mean! - in the mail? I'm pretty desperate at this stage.

Yours

Trevor

Dear Mr Murray,

Ever since my wife started reading your stories she has lost all interest in sex. Our marriage is on the rocks, and it is all because of you. Perhaps you could make amends in future tales by having a character named Gloria do rude things to a character named Stanley. If possible, could you also have Stanley wearing leather suspenders? That would help. I think it is the least you could do.

Yours,

Stanley

Dear O. Spaniel,

I wish to complain about a mistake in one of your recent stories. In your tale The Dogwood Shandy you claimed that Pastor Albert Ruffleford was a member of the Willing Baptists in the big white church on Baxter Street. This is incorrect. Pastor Ruffleford - my grandfather - was in fact a member of the Splendid Methodists in the small brick church on Russel

Street, or was until the vicious split of '42. If you can't get details like this right, why should readers believe your claim to be a famous astronaut?

Yours
Buzz Ruffleford Jrn.

Dear Murray,
Enough is enough! I am sick and tired of the way you lose control of sentences and let them ramble on and on splendiferously with bumpy cadence and made up verbage tragically unabridged by earnest punctuation almost every time without fortuitous grace. Don't you know the Queens' English? I am writing to her today to report you. You are in big trouble.

Yours
Brian

Dear Sir,
It has come to my attention that you have recently penned a short story entitled The Flatulent Barrister. I would like to procure a copy of the said story at your earliest convenience because I believe it may be a thinly veiled portrayal of myself. If this is so, I will see you in court.

Yours,
Lawrence Cheesecutter QC

Dear O.,
You might not remember me. I'm the girl with the Angus Young tattoo from the supermarket. The copy of the story you gave me is all coffee stained and wrinkly and makes false claims about you being a famous writer. I went into a bookshop and they said they'd never heard of you. I think you took advantage of me. I want my beany back.

Yours
Lisa

Dear O.,
I am a poet like you so I know you will understand me even though no one else does. Could you read my poems? Most of them are about my ex-girlfriend Susy. She left me so I wrote poems about it. I sent them to a publisher but he is obviously a tosser and is only interested in money. The fascist! You know what they are like. Could you finish reading them and get back to me by next week because I am going surfing.

Yours
Jeff

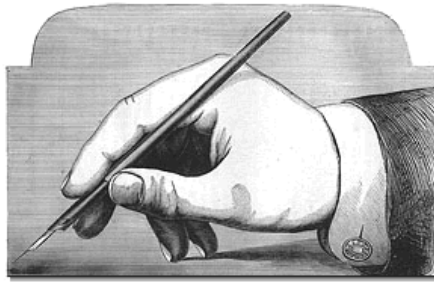
Dear Arsehole,
I feel really sorry for you. You poor bastard. Your stories are crap. Except the one where Jack Nicholson chases his son around the maze with an axe and dies with a funny look on his face. It was awesome.

Sincerely,
Neville

Dear Mr Murray,
I voted for you at the Elegant Ridge Poetry slam last September, mainly because I liked your jacket. It was the blue one with white trims. What happened this year? You looked like a hipster. That's why I voted for James WF Roberts in the grey jacket with stripes. I remind you that we are unusually blessed with any number of excellent men's wear stores in this district. Lift your game, sir!

Disappointed.
Chris

CONTACT



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