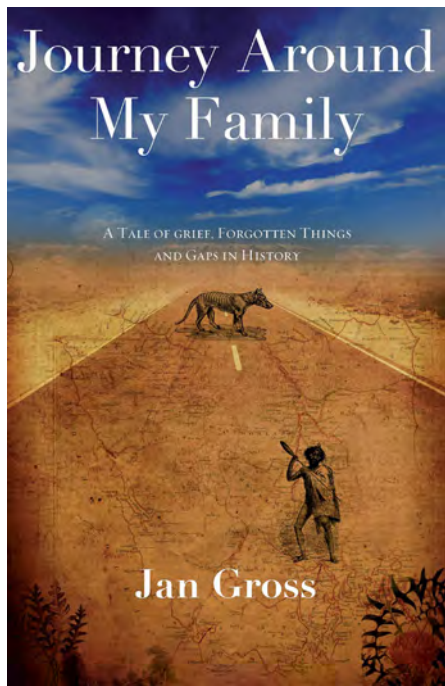


MEDIA RELEASE



Journey Around My Family

A TALE OF GRIEF, FORGOTTEN THINGS AND
GAPS IN HISTORY

By Jan Gross

When Jan Gross was widowed at the age of 64, she embarked on an unexpected journey — both emotional and physical. Not long after her husband's funeral Jan left Melbourne, and her family, to travel around Tasmania alone. *Journey Around My Family* is the candid, soul-bearing and gently humorous tribute to this time in Jan's life interspersed with memories of another lone journey taken to Western Australia, years prior.

In Tasmania the narrator relishes her solitude, the strange beauty of the landscape, and the sights, tastes and smells of a different place. She talks of things forgotten; forgotten animals, the Tasmanian Tiger, forgotten people, the explorer Borchgrevink, and forgotten sports, the game of Trugo. The denial of history she witnesses in Tasmania becomes a metaphor for her own attempts at denial and forgetting. How else to deal with the pain of losing a beloved husband to dementia? Gradually, as she travels around, memories of her husband intrude into the day's events, and she begins to feel the heat of her family that rains down on her in the form of letters and phone calls. When she visits Maria Island and Bruny Island, the islands become a symbol of her own sense of isolation.

In Western Australia she attempts to trace the histories of her parents and grandparents. Once again there are gaps, in the revelations about her grandfather, absences from court archives and from death records.

Journey Around My Family is a deeply personal narrative, based mostly upon the author's experiences — with some fictional elements included to assist the story. Originally written as a creative writing thesis, since its publication it has been described as 'a gem' and 'a warm, intimate journey' that 'evokes colourful vistas, tastes, smells and emotions'.

RRP: \$24.95
Pb, 147 pages
ISBN: 9781921642449
Publisher Sid Harta
Distributor Dennis Jones
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MEDIA RELEASE

Jam Dreaming

FROM ST KILDA TO NAPLES, A TALE OF FOOD
AND SELF-DISCOVERY

By Jan Gross

When fifteen-year-old Eileen meets Mama Jocsdi, the owner of a specialty food shop, she realises she wants to learn more about her own culture and find a purpose in her young life.

This leads her on an incredible journey of self-discovery, throughout which she comes across a number of fascinating characters — all of whom have a unique impact on her soul.

There's a down-and-out footballer who redeems himself with a local Aboriginal team, a shearers' cook full of hilarious anecdotes, not to mention the crazy bats in the Botanical Gardens.

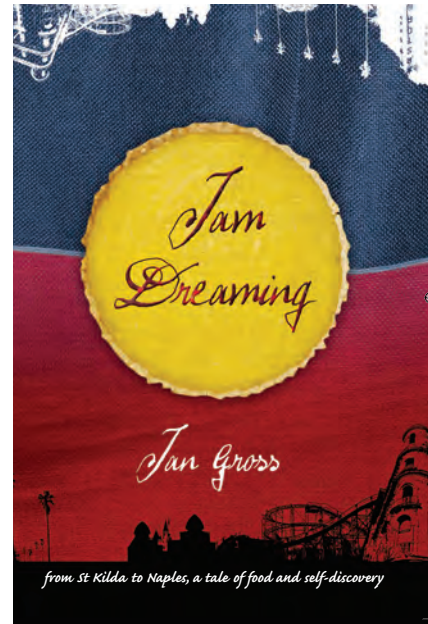
But can Eileen prove to herself and Mama that she is capable of more responsibility?

Including luscious descriptions of food, from Eastern European and indigenous Australian fare, to confections from seventeenth century Naples, *Jam Dreaming* show how food has the ability to shape our lives, and can bring the most unlikely of people together.

About the Author

After many years working as a solicitor in Mt Eliza, Victoria, Jan Gross retired in her early sixties to care for her ailing husband. Eventually he entered a nursing home where he died, due to stroke-related dementia, in 2003.

She has two adult sons and three granddaughters. As well as reading voraciously, the author is a keen foodie and cook. This had led to conscientious daily walks. When not walking, reading, eating or cooking she is a spectator of cricket and football (especially if Collingwood is winning) and a concert goer (especially if chamber music is playing). She has had a short story published in *Meanjin* and three short pieces published in the English food magazine *Petits Propos Culinaires*. *Journey Around My Family*, and *Jam Dreaming* are her first books.



RRP: \$24.95

Pb, 382 pages

ISBN: 9781921829581

Publisher Sid Harta

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