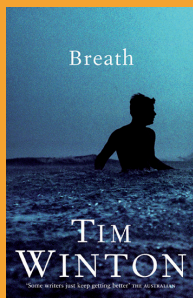


Miles Franklin Literary Award 2009 Winner



Breath Tim Winton Penguin

An absolutely compelling new level of achievement from one of Australia's best and best-loved writers, *Breath* will captivate Winton's fans and command new readers.

Breath opens with Bruce Pike, now a paramedic, arriving too late to save a teenage boy's life. Pike's partner wonders why the boy killed himself. Pike knows he didn't. He doesn't know the boy, but he knows the story. He still lives with the legacy of his own adolescence.

When Loonie and Pike started to surf, they cycled from Angelus to the beach with their styrofoam boards, buffeted by the wind and, when they finally get to the sea, the waves. They couldn't help it: they were terrified; they were addicted.

Among the local surfers, one guy stood out. He turned up alone, when the swell was highest, and left the rest of them for dead. Gradually Loonie and Pike got to know this loner, Sando, who took them under his wing, showing them secret beaches and ever-bigger waves. He taught them about surfing and about life. But the sea can teach the hard way, and so could Sando. In the endless search for the biggest wave, the biggest high, some riders don't make it. Half a lifetime later, Pike can't free himself from where the ride took him.

With *Breath*, Tim Winton's writing has attained a new level of mastery. This book confirms his standing alongside Ian McEwan and Philip Roth as one of the major chroniclers of the human condition, a writer of novels that are at the same time simple and profound, relentlessly gripping and deeply moving.



About Tim Winton

Tim Winton has published twenty books for adults and children, and his work has been translated into 25 languages. Since his first novel *An Open Swimmer* won the Australian/Vogel Award in 1981, he has won the Miles Franklin Literary Award four times (for *Shallows*, *Cloudstreet*, *Dirt Music* and *Breath*) and twice been shortlisted for the Booker Prize (for *The Riders* and *Dirt Music*). He lives in Western Australia.

What the Judges said ...

Breath is a searing document about masculinity, about risk, and about young people's desire to push the limits. Winton is at the height of his powers as a novelist, and this is his greatest love letter yet to the sea, to the coast of West Australia, and a compelling testimony to the role of surfing in Australian culture. Written in Winton's own distinctive voice, we can sense that it is also a homage to some of his favourite writers: Salinger, Faulkner, Melville and Hemingway. But as we are drawn in by the elemental currents of its narrative and the compelling, wave-like force of events, *Breath* raises disturbing questions about desire and 'the damage done'. What lines are crossed during rite's passage? What ethical constraints affect relations between different generations of men and women? Throughout the novel we hear the scream of wind and storm waves and the distant, siren call of the bombora – surf breaking far out at sea. After 'so much damage, too much shame', can there be a going back?

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