



Miles Franklin Literary Award 2009 Longlist

Breath

Tim Winton

Hamish Hamilton (Penguin Books)

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 sixteen languages. Since his first novel *An Open Swimmer* won the Australian/Vogel Award in 1981, he has won the Miles Franklin Literary Award three times (for *Shallows*, *Cloudstreet* and *Dirt Music*) and twice been shortlisted for the Booker Prize (for *The Riders* and *Dirt Music*). He lives in Western Australia.