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## APPENDICES

### A. Biography of The Author

#### COLIN THIELE

(Born: 16 Nov 1920 Eudunda, South Australia; Died: 4 Sep  
2006 Brisbane)

Colin Thiele was a bilingual child in a German farming community and from a young age read widely in both German and English. His parents were Carl Wilhelm and Amalie Anna (nee Wittwer) Thiele. He attended Julia and Eudunda primary schools and Kapunda high school. Henry Lawson (q.v.) was an early influence on his writing as Thiele could relate to the rural characters and settings of *While the Billy Boils*. He enrolled at the University of Adelaide in 1937, forming lasting friendships with the poets Rex Ingamells, Max Harris, Flexmore Hudsonwi), Geoffrey Dutton, Paul Pfeiffer and D.B. Kerr (qq.v.), and seeing some of his early poems published in *Jindyworobak Anthologies, Angry Penguins* and *Poetry*. Thiele graduated from the University of Adelaide in 1941 and then served as a radar mechanic in northern Australia with the RAAF during the Second World War. His teaching career began in Port Lincoln in 1946 and led to his appointment as principal of Wattle Park Teachers' College, Adelaide, in 1965. At university Thiele had been impressed by the teaching excellence and dedication of Douglas Mawson, an inspiration for his own highly regarded reputation as an educator.

Thiele combined his professional life as a teacher and speaker with his prolific writing of poetry, fiction, children's books, biography, radio plays and educational texts. Most of his books are set in South Australia, although his concerns are universal. Among his best known children's books are *Storm Boy* (1963) and *Blue Fin* (1969) - both of which were made into films.

Thiele's childhood is evident in many books, including *The Sun on the Stubble* (1961), later made into an award-winning television series. Thiele wrote and edited over 100 books, saying that he had 'a particular affection' for *Storm Boy*, *Pinquo*, *Jodie's Journey*, *Blue Fin*, *Coorong* and *Heysen of Hahndorf*, because in their writing he came closest to 'getting it right'.

Known as an environmentalist, Thiele wrote several books about endangered Australian locations, including *Coorong* (1972) and *Range Without Man: The North Flinders* (1974). Many of his books have been translated and published abroad. In 1977 he was made a Companion of the Order of Australia for his services to literature and education. Thiele was known as a faithful correspondent: he received and answered thousands of letters from children, kept at the National Library and the University of South Australia. Diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in the 1950s, Thiele had many joint replacement operations and settled in Queensland with his wife Rhonda in 1993. He continued writing until close to the time of his death.

Thiele was chosen as one of 150 great South Australians by a panel of *The Advertiser* senior writers to celebrate the 150th anniversary of *The Advertiser* newspaper, 12 April 2008.

Adapted from: <https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A13687>

#### B. Synopsis of February Dragon

February Dragon (1987) is written to encourage people especially young-adult to increase their awareness of environmental issues especially the bushfires. It tells the story of Resin, Turps, and Columbine who lived in the countryside surrounded by tropical bush. Thiele's narrative is focalized through the perspective of three siblings growing up on a small farm fifteen miles from the nearest town (Gumbowie) and adjoining thirty to forty miles

of uncleared bushland, partly state forest and partly privately owned, known to locals as “The Big Scrub.”

The storyline is simple, presenting in episodic way. The conflict is less complicated, it only shows the everyday life of the children, their adventure in the bush, and their relationship with the animals. The author illustrates different kinds of human-nature relationships. At the end of the story, he shows the implication of human careless attitude that causes bushfires. It destroyed every parts of the town leaving trauma, both for children and adult.

Adapted from: Rigby, K. (2015) *Dancing with Disaster: Environmental Histories, Narratives, and Ethics for Perilous Times*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.