Author’s Note

_Winged Seed Songs_ is a special selection of my poetry written over the last forty years or so. These poems were inspired in the main by listening to some of the world’s greatest musical works often performed in our remarkable Perth Concert Hall. Incidentally, I once recited my own poems here as part of our internationally successful poetry reading group, _Poetry in Motion_. The notion of a poet ekphrastically mimicking or responding to music is probably as old as poetry itself, but I have always felt somewhat chastened by the poet’s achievements compared to those of the composer. The immediacy and universality of music’s appeal and its power to instantly induce very physical responses must make the poet envy this art form. The other qualities of music that are there to admire as well—formal patterns, narratives, imagery and deeper themes, linked with the emotional states evoked—may well be shared to some degree with literary and visual arts, yet I continue to crave the power to induce audience or reader responses as immediate and strong as those that composers and musicians seem to achieve effortlessly. That is not to suppose writing and performing music is any less exacting than the other artistic endeavours!

To that end, I have experimented with poetic forms that owe much to certain classical structures in music. At other times I simply have sought ways to evoke the kinds of lyrical and passionate responses which humankind is capable of experiencing when listening to music. After all, the origins of song and poetry are assumed to be one and the same. Additionally, I have included some of my poems inspired by works of particular composers.

The title of the collection was suggested by Ken Gasmier from a phrase in one of my poems which in itself was an allusion to Katharine Susannah Prichard’s well-known novel from her Goldfields Trilogy: _Winged Seeds_ (Australasian Publishing Company, by arrangement with Jonathon Cape, 1950). In her trilogy, the tragic character ‘Kalgoorla’ was a Wangai woman she named after the WA ‘woody-’ or ‘silky-pear’ (Xylomelum angustifolium). The pear-shaped nut from this tree, common in the Yilgarn area, splits open eventually to release two wing-shaped seeds which can thus more easily float away from the parent tree to germinate with the next desert thunderstorm.

I dedicate this book to my wife Rita Tognini, who led me to listen to most of the world’s greatest music.  
_Glen Phillips, 2014._

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