



Ross Campbell grew up in Melbourne. He was a Rhodes scholar who studied English literature with C.S. Lewis at Oxford and a classics scholar who could read Greek and Latin fluently. He also took a correspondence course in typing, but did not finish it. During the Second World War, he won a Distinguished Flying Cross for flying bomber missions over Europe. He turned to journalism after academe turned from him, and eventually became dag-in residence at Sir Frank Packer's Australian Consolidated Press. He and his wife Ruth had four children, Sally, Patrick, Laura – who became Nell – and Cressida. One of them once declared that: "Red Riding Hood was a dope". Ross, as was his writing habit, duly noted it in his little notebook.

Shelley Gare has worked as a journalist and editor in Sydney, Melbourne and London for over 25 years. She trained on the *Daily News* in Perth and was the founding editor of *The Australian's Review of Books*.

"An embarrassing thing occurred lately at the office. While I was talking to a couple of Important People, I took out my handkerchief. It was a small one with a picture of Little Bo Peep on it.

"They showed much interest in the handkerchief, and asked if I had a Little Tommy Tucker one. (I have not, though I possess several Donald Ducks.)" ...

... and so journalist Ross Campbell began another of his dry, wry and exquisitely funny columns about Oxalis Cottage, Theodora, Lancelot, Little Nell and Baby Pip.

He discovered the rise of refrigerator snobbery and pondered the mental

effects of reading Red Riding Hood forty or fifty times with a "growing disposition to see the wolf's point of view". He ruminated on the making of mouse costumes and what happens when children decide the bunny plate is beneath them.

Fatherhood, he wrote, is "an unpredictable experience, like flying or eating oysters. You cannot tell whether you will like it until you have tried it."

Everyone who has ever been in a family must try Ross Campbell.



"A great example of how comic writers should have faith in small, true moments."  
RICHARD GLOVER

I can still recite swags of his columns from 40 years ago and they still make me laugh out loud.  
GERALDINE BROOKS

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"He was the Seinfeld of his age" – KEL RICHARDS

MY LIFE AS A FATHER



ROSS CAMPBELL



My Life  
as a  
Father

"A real eye for the ridiculous"  
FOREWORD BY  
BARRY HUMPHRIES

ROSS CAMPBELL  
EDITED BY SHELLEY GARE

Ross Campbell didn't find his real start in journalism until he was 43, becoming Australia's most widely-read humorous columnist. His magazine and newspaper pieces about family-life and fatherhood went into a million homes each week. For the jacket of his first collection *Daddy, Are You Married?* he wrote of himself: "Although I have a busy, turbulent home life, I am fortunately able to relax each day in the wholesome atmosphere of a Sydney newspaper office. When I first began writing, I used to ride the high horse. I ride the low horse now, and it suits me better. My editor sometimes stamps a star on my wrist for doing good work." He went on to publish two more collections, *Mummy, Who Is Your Husband?* and *She Can't Play My Bagpipes*, as well as his autobiography *An Urge To Laugh*. His work has been out of print for over two decades. Now you can rediscover him, or if you're very lucky – discover him for the first time.

COVER ILLUSTRATIONS Andrew Joyner  
COVER DESIGN Sharon McGrath