



Canberra poet Chris Jones with the painting that is on the cover of his latest collection. Picture: Joni Scanlon

New poetry book explores life's light and shadows

AN AVID reader from a young age, Chris Jones started writing poetry to combat mental illness when he was 16 years old.

"I suffer from depression and schizophrenia as well so I was very depressed and I just used to write down my feelings as poetry," Jones said.

Now the Canberra-based author has released his second poetry compilation, *Where There's Light There's Shadow*.

Jones was born in Malaysia and travelled extensively during his childhood because of his father's job in the Royal Australian Air Force.

"It wasn't really good for me, changing schools. I am a very quiet

person usually so a couple of times I had a nervous breakdown almost," he said.

Jones said he always had an interest in English literature and was inspired by horror, science fiction and crime writers to try writing himself. After moving to Canberra, he studied at the former School Without Walls for about three years.

He then enrolled in the Professional Writing Course at the University of Canberra, where he received a distinction for poetry and the imagination. Now a member of the ACT Writers, Jones has had his work published in magazines including *Ripple Magazine*, and *Short and Twisted*, as well as

university magazines *First* and *Curio*. The creative Canberran is also a painter and designed the book cover for *Where There's Light There's Shadow*.

Released on April 15 by Sid Harta Publishers, his most recent book has been a creative outlet for his thoughts and includes poetry that covers different periods of his life.

Some of his poetry tackles depression and schizophrenia, and his work contrasts between dark and uplifting pieces. Jones said writing poetry definitely helped him deal with his mental illness.

"Sometimes it's a good way to express your feelings," he said.

Joni Scanlon