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The Society presents these poems in the belief that each is the work of the submitting student. Teachers of the award-winning students have verified the authenticity of the poems. In some instances extensive searches have been made to check originality.

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"My Country"

The love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens
Is running in your veins.
Strong love of grey-blue distance,
Brown streams and soft, dim skies –
I know but cannot share it,
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror –
The wide brown land for me!

The stark white ring-barked forests,
All tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The hot gold hush of noon.
Green tangle of the brushes,
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree tops
And ferns the warm dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When sick at heart, around us,
We see the cattle die –
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady, soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!
Land of the Rainbow Gold,
For flood and fire and famine,
She pays us back three-fold.
Over the thirsty paddocks
Watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness
That thickens as we gaze...

An opal-hearted country,
A wilful, lavish land –
All you who have not loved her,
You will not understand –
Though earth holds many splendours,
Wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country
My homing thoughts will fly

Dorothea Mackellar
(1885 – 1968)

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2011 Entry Figures

Total entries	8258
Number of schools	785

Categories

Senior secondary	827
Junior secondary	2032
Upper primary	3826
Lower primary	1475
Learning assistance secondary	46
Learning assistance primary	41

State

ACT	194
NSW	5148
NT	99
QLD	388
SA	408
TAS	289
VIC	911
WA	688

President's Report

The past year has been a transformative journey of progress and achievement.

Not only are the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards continuing to thrive but the milestones in 2011 have been numerous.

Teachers and students will have noticed our bright new website launched earlier this year. We hope the content is helpful and encouraging and early indications are that it has been.

Sponsorship has been a major focus and we were relieved and overjoyed when the federal government decided to renew its substantial support of the awards for the next three years.

It has also been a year of evolution. One of our new sponsors is Coalworks, a mining company which has bought the former Mackellar property "Kurrumbede" and is keen to see children's poetry recognised and a local literary connection continued.

Another new sponsor was gas company Santos which funded a venture of a different kind. Poetry workshops were held over three days at eight schools across northern NSW by children's poet Jackie Hosking. The initiative was so well received, the committee would like to see the project extended to other parts of Australia as it is a positive way of giving back to the educational community that supports us at the same time as raising awareness of the competition.

We thank these sponsors along with Gunnedah Shire Council, BHP Billiton, Whitehaven Coal, Qantas, Ramsay Agribusiness, NSW Community Relations Commission and Regional Arts NSW for ensuring these awards reach out on a local and national level.

Entry numbers continue to climb as the online entry format becomes more familiar and streamlined with more than 8000 poems passing the judges' eye.

The stature of our judges this year only underlines our status as the leading national children's poetry competition. Joanne Horniman and Sally Murphy are not only widely known and published authors themselves but they were both award-shortlisted by the Children's Book Council of Australia. They bring a knowing and discerning eye to this difficult process.

But none of this happens without the young poets who pour time and thoughts into their entries. We congratulate you and look forward to reading your work again.

Philippa Murray

Primary Sections

Judge's Report

As a teacher, I have often watched the faces of my students become closed when I tell them they are going to be writing poetry. When I see looks of fear, boredom, or just disinterest relating to poetry, I always feel a little sad – because a child who doesn't like to read or to write poetry has missed out on something somewhere along the line. Good poetry can give the reader a life experience in the space of just a few lines. And writing poetry allows the poet the chance to paint those life experiences with strokes that the whole world can see.

Judging this year's entries was a delight for me because I could see that there are thousands of students, and hundreds of teachers, for whom poetry is pleasure. Long or short, structured or not, poems touched me, teased me, tickled me, taking me on a wonderful journey around Australia and into the hearts and minds of Australian children.

The theme of this year's contest – Making Pictures – inspired many poems about different forms of art and visual imagery. Many used metaphors of painting to draw word-pictures on a range of topics. Other young poets chose not to use the optional theme, with their poems ranging from light-hearted word-play to very serious topics including death and dying, reconciliation.

Another joy for me as reader was seeing the diversity of form. From the acrostic and diamante – particularly popular among junior poets – to very structured rhyming poems, to free flowing verse, this diversity enhanced my reading pleasure. The best poems were not of any one particular form, however – whether rhymed, or unrhymed, patterned or not, what made each of the winning and commended poems stand out were two things. Firstly, the rhythm of the piece, making it a pleasure to read on the page and out loud, so that the reader is not aware of the structure of the poem. A good poem is pleasing to read. Secondly, the poems which really stood out distilled some aspect of life, or a life experience, into their lines. A good poem takes the reader on a journey, making him or her nod in agreement or gasp in disbelief.

To those students who didn't win awards – don't be disheartened. Just having written a poem is a victory in itself. You are all winners.

Sally Murphy

Secondary Sections

Judge's Report

This year's optional topic, 'Making Pictures' prompted several interpretations – there were poems about paintings, either in general, or particular, and poems about artists. Some poems took a photograph as a starting point; some were news photographs that prompted compassionate thoughts about their subjects. One of two poems were about 'making pictures' with words, which is one way of looking at poetry itself.

Many entrants chose their own topics. Very strongly represented were poems full of compassion for others: of animals caged and abused, refugees, hunger, poverty, war, illness. There were poems about the pain of social exclusion, and bullying, including cyber bullying. There were also poems full of love: of family and friends and pets. Sadly, some poems were about the disappointment of families that weren't nurturing enough. Many poems contained a thoughtful wisdom.

The standard of the winning poems was very high, written by students who obviously read and write poetry regularly. Reading poetry, immersion in it, is a way of fostering a keen ear for the music of poetry, and for its language. In this way we can train our minds to think more deeply, observe more carefully, and choose words with more precision.

Congratulations to all students and teachers who submitted work this year; it was a pleasure reading your work.

Joanne Horniman

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

2011 Anthology

WINNERS AND RUNNERS-UP

Lower Primary - Winner

Emily Penfold

Miandetta Primary School, DEVONPORT TAS

I Remember

I remember my first day at school
when I had just turned five,
I was so excited but a little scared inside.
I had a brand new school bag
and an art smock I could use,
a summer dress, a yellow hat
and shiny buckled shoes.

I remember my sixth birthday,
we had some pink balloons,
I had a little party but it ended much too soon.
Mum made a fairy castle cake,
fit for any queen,
a jelly moat, and four tall towers
(but one was on a lean).

I remember the first time I flew,
soaring way up high,
my tummy, it felt queasy and I had big butterflies.
The sights of the big city
and adventures that we had,
a carriage ride, Christmas lights,
leaving felt so sad.

I remember scorching summer days
relaxing at the beach,
seagulls circling high above, cry out their hungry screech.
Exploring shallow rock pools
and building castles high,
finding seashells and scuttling crabs,
till the sun fell from the sky.

Memories are the pictures
we keep within our hearts,
that's what my dad has told me right from the very start.
These are just some snapshots,
that I thought I'd share a while,
precious treasures, mine to keep
that always make me smile.

Judge's Comment

The comureposition of this poem is very mature for this age group. The use of a fairly complex rhyme pattern works well, and the use of near rhymes in some of the couplets adds to the overall flow rather than detracting. The rhythm is also complex and well executed.

The reader is taken on a sensory journey through childhood with a beautiful collection of images

Lower Primary – Runner-up

Joel Lye

Tamworth Public School, TAMWORTH NSW

Trumpular Tree

Sitting lazily under a trumpular tree
Listening to the wind blow
The autumn leaves touch my cold face
And warm it like sunshine.

Judge's Comment

This is a lovely picture evoked in four well composed line, showing that a poem does not have to be long to pack a punch. The reader finds herself sitting there under that tree with the poet, basking in the warmth.

Upper Primary – Winner

Msgana Akele

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

The Colour Of Love

To paint the edge of the world
Using white and blue
Healing for the sick.

To stipple the edge of the world
Using orange mixed with red
Bread for the hungry.

To scrape the edge of the world
Using brown and grey
Homes for the homeless.

To splash the edge of the world
Using aqua
Quenching thirst.

To stain the edge of the world
Using purple and crimson
Clothing the naked.

To airbrush the edge of the world
Using pink and yellow
Hope for the desperate.

To dribble the edge of the world
With silver and gold
Joy for the down-hearted.

A masterpiece of love.

Judge's Comment

This is a very mature poem which brings the competition theme to life beautifully. The use of a range of artistic techniques as symbols, and the excellent word selection makes this poem a delight to read and to ponder.

Upper Primary – Runner-up

Richard Garth

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

The End of 'The World'

What will you find at the end of 'The World'?
What will be your surprise?
What will you see at the great drop-off?
A rock, a river, more skies?

I know what's at the end of 'The World',
Not a castle, a dragon or key.
Whenever you actually write 'The World'
The answer is a 'D'!

Judge's Comment

This clever riddle poem will have the reader smiling at its simplicity. Whilst a clever reader may see the answer coming, the crafty composition will still delight. The poet makes strong use of rhyme and a rhythm pattern which is upbeat and works well for the subject matter.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary – Winner

Theophilus Din

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

Fire Fly

The firefly flew in the sky at night,
What I saw was a glamorous flight.

The firefly flew to an old gum tree,
It buzzed, glowed and fluttered at me.

The firefly illuminated the dark,
it hovered and buzzed around the bark.

The firefly was bright to see,
It hovered and fluttered around little me.

The firefly was a star in space,
It was so hard to find a trace.

The firefly flew at the open sky
I guess it's time to say 'good-bye'.

Judge's Comment

This beautiful rhyming poem buzzes and flits just like its subject. The poet has chosen to use rhyming couplets, each offering a glimpse of the firefly as it moves through the poet's line of sight, taking the reader along on its flight. Lovely.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary – Runner-up

Lachlan Bolton

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

The Hunt

I saw them first
Spouting water
Erupting from the surface
Of the deep, blue sea.
Their movements graceful in an enormous way
Gliding sufficiently through the water
Tails slamming as if trying to get someone's attention.

But it's not all play.
Then there's the hunt.

Circling their prey in an exquisite way
Creating a cage of bubbles
Around the herring,
Sealing them in their living tomb.
Answering the humpers call they dive as one
Ascending through the cage,
Springing mouths wide
Engulfing a tonne of fish
Time and time again
The same action repeated
Again and again
In the same way
Breaching the surface of the water
And splashing down again.

Judge's Comment

This poem presents a well wrought picture of whales at sea - gliding, playing and hunting. The change of pace from the lumbering grace of the first stanza to the action of the hunt in the last is separated by the effective transition of the middle two lines.

Junior Secondary – Winner

Elizabeth Waldron

Newtown High School Of The Performing Arts, NEWTOWN NSW

Verfremdungseffect: Estranging The Audience

Distaste curls your lips
As you view the strangers

The little old ladies
With umbrella frames
And chicken-bone hands;

The too fat and too thin,
Who warp the landscape
Smiles sickly as treacle;

The gossips and gawkers,
A cascade of whispers –
Rumour by rote;

Your own self, for being,
Deep down,
Past the layers
That mar the progress of sympathy,

Repulsed.

Disgusted by:

The homeless who huddle –
Compassion is required,
But they reek;

Recoil from;

The apologies, which really,
When stripped of all glamour,
Really say –
“I know you were wrong”;

The disciplinarians who shape your expectations
But wind up your conscience
And ruin relationships –

mothers and judges, doctors and teachers, policemen and sports
coaches, lawyers –

Lawyers that quibble over “thou shalt not”;
Women who compulsively root out people’s failings;

Your own self for not being open-minded enough to keep from
categorising people
To not quietly sneer
In disgust, in fear,
At –

lesbians, gays, the disabled, the homeless, the elderly, women,
children, teenagers, yourself –

Your own self.

Judge’s Comment

This poem first drew me by the exactness of its word choice, and its sentiments. The rhythm has the effect of slowing the reader down, of making one think.

Verfremdungseffekt is, broadly speaking, a dramatic device to make the audience see the familiar in a new way, of challenging assumptions. Many feel that this is the role of all art - to make the audience see freshly, and think about things differently.

Cleverly, and with great confidence, this poem challenges us to think about how we perceive others, and ultimately, ourselves. It demands to be read many times, and is rewarding with each reading.

Junior Secondary – Runner-up

Clara Borg

Academy Of Mary Immaculate, FITZROY VIC

Polaroid Dreams

The light casts strange shadows through the curtains
Flimsy drapes barely hiding her from the sun
Which dapples the floor and warms her bare feet

She dreams Polaroid dreams
Of angles and shadows and the perfect smile
All captured in exactly the right moment,
A moment of chance and of flawlessness
Hung up in the rows of her mind and nailed there for all to see

She travels
Her camera slung around her neck, its buttons faded and worn
Capturing images

Of orderly towns – quaint and huddled within their neat picket
fences and mulberry bushes
And then of the rambling country, ancient castle ruins.
Royal bloodshed and bluestone courtyards tickle her fancy and then
She is whirling through the air, the sky with its clouds shaped like
smiling dimples and the rosy lips of the sun swallowing her in its
azure madness.
It holds her until the sun is conquered by the moon - an elusive
silvery orb that cradles her and cultivates her fantasies with
spoonfuls of shimmering stars.
Of nature she dreams

Then she is dropped into a bustling city, loud and animated.
She stalks the streets, captures images of life
Of sprawling graffiti, vulgar political views scribbled over a
dilapidated factory door
'Hope is dead' they write' - hidden in a filthy corner they weep
Towering skyscrapers loom, their shadows casting darkness over
lazy vandals.
Perfectly lined streets, crisscrossing over each other amidst the
absolute chaos of time.
And now it is night, and the buildings allow themselves to fade into
darkness.
Garish signs flash from every direction.
The people become louder, dancing and stumbling
She is giddy with the fascination and temptation of glamour.

Of cities she dreams
No-one stops to appreciate the trees from across the river, beyond
the polluted, taxi-strewn streets, she thinks absentmindedly.
They look eerie against the grey-blue sky of early morning.
Their leafless spindly branches cast off at all angles,
creating a twisted network of delicate etchings into the sky.
She is restless now and lets herself be carried away into the bosom
of the sea.
Waves rock her and send her sprawling in a salty stupor.
She plunges deep into the depths of the ocean.
And now she swims with the fish, wraps kelp around her ankles,
wears sea-daises in her hair.
Of seashells and the ocean she dreams.

All these images captured within a tiny roll of film
Wound up tightly in her pocket
But more precious than gold
And more beautiful than all she has seen
Is the love that her heart now shelters

The love for the invention of imagination
Which allows her to visit these places whenever she wishes.

Judge's Comment

This beautiful, lyrical poem is a dizzying ride through the imagination. The rhythm and phrasing is sure and seductive, the images beguiling. A waterfall of words, full of optimism and dreams, and the energy of youth.

Senior Secondary - Winner

Hrishikesh Srinivas

Sydney Grammar School, DARLINGHURST NSW

Whyalla Beach

From lunch to sundown driving through dust,
At Whyalla we stopped a few hours.
How could it be a port, when there was
no sea in sight, no hotel resort?
A marine museum waved from the side
Incongruous, embedded in rock,
the Onesteel factory wearing a tin grey frock,
that mocked the plans by which we were to abide.

A deep dazzling orange place,
where the machinery touched the water(!), tentative,
and the bluest sea licked the shore wide.
There were a few on the public space,
children in the waves, a family fighting
in the huge pool off to the side,
fishermen on the jetty with rods and netting,
the odd ship the horizon dotting.

On the rocks they were playing
some sort of game with the water,
young dark and burnt figures swaying
together, their voices rising above the wind.
On the other side they were diving
from a ledge, the family with floats
pushing each other off, past them
the factory outlines gleaming, further on few boats.

We walked along the jetty,
didn't care much for the town,
orange in the light glinting
off dusty windows as the sun went down.
A huge pelican sat high above us-
Scary, to recall its impervious unmoving eye
-and its taking off was the sound of
a great rushing, impressive scoff.

We watched it veer in the gusts
which slapped around us forcefully.
The lookout, further up the town of rust,
seemed quiet and untouched by the harsh winds.
The shelters wore the smell of pee.
We didn't stop, instead observing
the men with buckets, rods in the sea,
walking back while it boiled beneath.

From the car we stood and watched
the wind and waves lashing against each other,
and as we got inside the sound was smothered

in the door.

We didn't stay there,
We stayed elsewhere.
But the rush of the bird's flight
enmeshed in the roar of the wind
with the sea embroiled in a fight
didn't want to leave, so we let it in.

Judge's Comment

This is a memorable and moving poem. From the opening lines, with their low-key, almost casual grace, it describes a place with such feeling and originality that the reader cannot help being drawn in. The 'Onesteel factory wearing a tin grey frock' and the 'great rushing, impressive scoff' of a pelican taking off, are some of the images that make this poem so impressive.

But underneath all this there is a growing sense of loss and loneliness, and something indefinable, the mysterious power of place and the sea. This perhaps comes from the elegiac rhythms, the phrasing and choice of words, and the observations of people and place. The final line resolves the poem beautifully. '(It) didn't want to leave, so we let it in.'

We have all passed through places that change us in some subtle way. We take them away with us. In reading this poem, we have experienced Whyalla Beach.

Senior Secondary – Runner-up

Jordan Dennis

Tumbarumba High School, TUMBARUMBA NSW

A Step Back in History

Wandering timidly down the narrow alley,
The daunting figures of the candid men mumbling suspiciously sent
shivers down my spine,
The terraces now appear brittle and grey, yet cast the perfect scene
for...
The silky sedan parked sharply in the shallow, grimy gutter sat
perfectly for the...
Quick getaway!
Towering steeples perched high in Woolloomooloo's smog-filled air,
The mellowness of the hollow terraces,
Abandoned from their glory years,
With mice rumbling up the dreary stairways,
Crumbling beneath their tiny feet,
Termite-riddled timber steps tell a million ancient stories,
From gory murders to an innocent child's first steps,
Old chimneys and marble fireplaces share the memories from a
child's first Christmas in 1920,
Hoping that Saint Nic would pay them a kind visit,
Wandering timidly down the narrow alley,
I now see my family history has, at last, found me.

Judge's Comment

This is an imaginative evocation of a place, and the past, strong in images and feeling. I love the descriptiveness of 'mice rumbling up the dreary stairways, 'Crumbling beneath their tiny feet', and the tenderness of the memory 'Hoping that Saint Nic would pay them a kind visit.'

An inner Sydney suburb and its history is brought vividly to life, and family stories remembered fondly, at last making sense. The poem is effectively resolved: 'I see my family history has, at last, found me.'

Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary - Winner

Tina Green

Corrimal High School, CORRIMAL NSW

Black Feather

Feather from a crow
Matted but delicate.
It could fall apart if you touch it.
Flossy feather, light
Good for tickling
But crows are mean.

Its end is spiky
Like black hair trimmed
Gelled with a hardened centre
Only the size of a pen
So black it's purple when you look up close.
Keep as a memory.

Crows make weird sounds
Like someone's coughing.
Crows are black.
I don't like crows.
They stare, their head on the side.
An evil look.
Angry Crow.
Black Feather.

Judge's Comment

This is a memorable and lovely poem, full of directly observed images. There is nothing stale or second-hand about the observations - it is sincere and original. I like the juxtapositions: the feather is 'Good for tickling/But crows are mean.' There are beautiful lines, simple and sure: 'Keep as a memory.'

The poem moves from descriptions of the feather to the crow itself, and the writer's feelings about those birds. This is a fresh way of looking at a crow, bringing out the very essence of the crow from an examination of one part.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary – Runner-up

John Scott

Holy Spirit College, BELLAMBI NSW

Silence

As the music rises it calms my mind
but in its wake is a screaming silence.
All I hear is the ringing of that profound silence
even with the sound
of cannon fire it does not dull its rage .

With the flaming torches there is an eerie glow
that reminds me that we are not of this land
and that it is not ours to claim.

As all of us march on the front we are forever in the screeching
clash of war,
with the shouts of men and the tearing of metal and flesh,
I am still over come by that same silence that is my calling

So here we are amongst friendly foes and needless to say their
smiles are of wicked descent.
with their foreign horns baying on the wind
and their marching drums thumping in constant rhythm
It is at this moment I found my silence is no more.

Judge's Comment

This is a vivid portrayal of the effect of war on one man's mind. It is personal, imaginative, with a sure rhythm and well-chosen words. An impressive poem.

Community Relations Commission Award - Winner

Chantelle Tran

Prairiewood High School, WETHERILL NSW

Sorrow

To adapt to the splashes of the waves,
to adapt to the months, the hours, the days.
To know your way across the seas,
to not living where you please.

To know when but to not know where,
just knowing that you wouldn't stay there.
The crowd rushes in numbers, one to ten,
getting ready to travel once again.

Moving every few months, moving once in a while,
making different friends, seeing them smile.
It breaks your heart to know you have to go,
it feels your heart with such a sad sorrow.

Moving homes, moving from place to place,
sometimes having to build camp, a new base.
From Winter to Summer, to Autumn to Spring,
a new month, a new year, a new beginning.

Sometimes I want to stay but can't,
this is the life of a migrant.

Judge's comment

This is a quiet poem, full of the sorrow of the title. The gentle rhythms and the clearly expressed feelings build up a picture of the writer's life. It is thought-provoking and emotive, prompting compassion and, hopefully, greater understanding.

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

2011 Anthology

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Lower Primary

Upper Primary

Learning Assistance Primary

Junior Secondary

Senior Secondary

Lower Primary

Lucy Bramhill

Newcastle East Public School, NEWCASTLE NSW

Seasons

Summer is hot
It tempts me to go into the
water
Sun baking, heat through my
skin
Dinner at the beach with friends
Tennis, ice cream, late nights
That is the purpose of summer...
I think

Autumn is cool
Leaves fall on me
Crunchy, brown flowers blowing
in the wind
Jumping in puddles
Splash! Splash!
A chill in the air
That is the purpose of Autumn...
I think

Winter is cold
Ice skating, snow skiing
Laughter fills my body
Hot chocolate, donuts, warm
fires
Mmm...
Sleeping in
That's the purpose of winter...
I think

Spring is warm
When baby animals are born
The flowers talk to me
Everything grows
Longer days
My birthday
Happy times
That is the purpose of spring...
I think

These four seasons make up a
year
Becoming true
Growing
Dying
This is their purpose
I know

Judge's Comment

A well composed walk through the seasons with mature use of repetition.

Benjamine Hall

Newcastle East Public School, NEWCASTLE NSW

Through My Eyes

Touching things that I like
Curtains waving in the wind
Dusty dirt on the floor

Smelling things that I like
Mashed potato and pumpkin too
Cooking cupcakes, sloppy things

Hearing things that I like
My friends talking to me
Grandma reading a story

Tasting things that I like
Lamingtons, chocolate and white sprinkles
Like white snowflakes

But through my eyes I only see black
My sight has gone
Like the world is dead.

Judge's Comment

A high impact poem which draws the reader in, surprising with its ending.



Tiana James

Sydney Distance Education, SYDNEY NSW

My Photo

When they take my photo
I always have a grin.
They stick it on the wall
With a big pink pin.
When the pin is rusty
They throw it in the bin.
When they take another photo
I'll wear another grin.

Judge's Comment

A simple, fun poem with lovely use of rhyme and rhythm.

Gemma Macaulay-Black

Gib Gate School, MITTAGONG NSW

Fire

Burning, flaming
Trees start to smoulder
Fighting, consuming
All that it takes hold of
Smoke, ashes
After it passes
39 lashes
Has the forest endured.

Judge's Comment

Effectively evokes the horror and destruction of bush fires.



Zeke Melmoth

St Matthew's Primary School, PAGE ACT

What I See

I see
Trees begging for water
The leaves dried out
Butterflies wanting food
Flowers are brown
Grass and trees bare
No colour in sight
Clouds are fallen
Ice-cream melting
Ponds, lakes and oceans
All dried out
Hills all gone

Nothing alive

Judge's Comment

An effective depiction of drought.

Sascha Moseley

Home School, BRIDGEWATER SA

My Pocket Knife

My knife carves like a spade
Digging away at the wood.
The shavings fall to the ground
Like autumn leaves
The blade flashes,
My knife bites the stick,
A shark attacking its prey.
Slowly my staff forms.
Holding the wood firmly
I whittle away.
The picture in my mind
Soon becomes the real thing.

Judge's Comment

Some strong imagery in this nice exploration of the theme.



Brianna Rankin

Ando Public School, ANDO NSW

Despair

A howling storm is brewing.
Trees begin dancing, swirling, twisting in pain;
Bent by gale force winds.
Ferocious winds pound sleepy houses,
Heavy rain shatters windows.
Furious black skies loom,
Lightning strikes, fires erupt;
Rolling thunder grows louder and louder.
Bridges cracking against the force of rushing water,
Currents getting faster and faster, stronger and stronger.
Huge waves sweeping people away,
Cars bobbing in the water.
Buildings are splintered and blown apart,
As torrents rip a trail of destruction through the towns.
Years of drought -
Ended with a cruel flood.

Judge's Comment

This vivid portrait of a flood with the final two lines providing an extra punch.

Upper Primary

Ambaye Akele

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

Can You Paint?

Can you paint fear?
In a heart? In a soul?
It's in the face, the strain in the mouth
In the wide eyes.

Can you paint hopelessness?
In a heart? In a soul?
It's in the shoulders, the tiredness and slouch,
In the weary arms.

Can you paint laziness?
In a heart? In a soul?
It's in the clothes, the dirt and rags,
In the ripped shirt.

Can you paint anger?
In a heart? In a soul?
It's in the brow, the clench of teeth,
In the lines.

Can you paint sadness?
In a heart? In a soul?
It's in the tears, they're hiding in shadows
In speechless words.

Can you paint guilt?
In a heart? In a soul?
It's in the eyes looking down below
In the shame of the tilt.

Can you paint friendship?
In a heart? In a soul?
It's in the laughter of each other,
In the chasing feet,
The pat on the back.

Judge's Comment

A thought-provoking exploration of the theme. Clever use of repetition.

Ayla Anderson

All Saints Anglican School, MERRIMAC QLD

Raven

I'm hurt
Lying on the ground
Blood seeping out
Soul ready to fly

Black Raven comes
Screeches out
Swoops down
And lifts my soul high

I'm flying
The ground
Flat way below me
As the raven flies with me

Swooping
Soaring
I leave the war
Behind

Judge's Comment

A moving poem.



Andre Bayer

Warranwood Primary School, WARRANWOOD VIC

Football

Football is a great sport
My favourite **O**ne of all.
Th**O**se big and strong athletes
ba**T**tling for the ball.
some faster than a **B**ullet
or stronger th**A**n a brick wall..
I **L**ove to play the game
My favourite one of a**L**l!

Judge's Comment

Very clever use of the acrostic form.

Caylum Butler

South Wagga Public School, WAGGA WAGGA NSW

Some Wise Advice

Once I met a tiny man
He acted very strange
When I asked him what was up
He ran far out of range

He skipped along a creaky fence
And down a dim, dark street
All I could do to follow him
Was chase his elfish feet

Trouble seemed to follow him
This crafty little man
And mayhem broke out all around
As we both ran and ran

He slipped into a hollow log
It narrowed like a funnel
Chasing fast I followed him
And squeezed down through a tunnel

Before my wide astonished eyes
Appeared a wondrous sight
Inside that tree were piles of gold
Imagine my delight!

At first I stood there paralysed
I grabbed a bit of gold
But right away the man appeared
I felt his tiny hold

He asked me not to take his loot
A tiny sobbing voice
He looked at me with puppy eyes
I really had no choice

He gave me now some wise advice
Then led me from his cave
"One day you'll make your pile of gold
If you work hard and save!"

Judge's Comment

Very mature command of rhyme and rhythm.

Miguel Cullen-Green

Central Coast Rudolf Steiner School, FOUNTAINDALE NSW

The Moon

The moon is
Big and bright
tonight,
And I can see
It in full sight.

I love the way
It waxes and wanes
And shines upon
the sea.

Judge's Comment

A beautiful glimpse of a full moon.



Finn-Ruby Dawe

Oxford Falls Grammar School, SEAFORTH NSW

Daughter of the Sky A Portrait of the Wind

Performing for the mountains,
She stands up on her toes,
Leaps across the valley,
Whistling as she goes.

The searching flame of bushfires,
Hunger for her kiss,
The lonely sand dunes linger,
Awaiting her caress.

The only Daughter of the Sky,
A princess on her throne,
Her helpful push upon a sail,
To guide the sailor home.

Judge's Comment

Lovely use of personification to bring the moon to life.

Yasmine Johnson

Chatswood Public School, CHATSWOOD NSW

An Artist's Perspective

A dusky blue:

The night sky in winter.

A sunset's pink,

Hugging the horizon.

Pigeons;

Like tiny flecks of grey.

And dribbling down the endless rows of grassy lawns,

Drops of rain, making their way towards the moist, warm earth.

Perfect composition.

For a fleeting moment.

Judge's Comment

A beautiful exploration of the theme.



Rose Thorpe

Central Coast Rudolf Steiner School, FOUNTAINDALE NSW

It's Hard

I know it's hard for a father
To watch his children grow
And see them change
Before his eyes
Before he even knows.

Judge's Comment

This one says a lot in just a few short lines.

Kiri Mitchell

Pybble Ladies' College, PYMBLE NSW

Today I'm Making Pizza

Today I'm making pizza
I hope it will be good
I really hope my pizza,
Will turn out as it should

I'll top it first with chocolate sauce
Then salsa, ham and cheese,
My mother told me that I could
Use anything I please

Marshmallows, egg and pineapple
Sausages and honey
My older sister's laughing now
I don't know what's so funny

Bicarbonate of soda
Cinnamon and salt
Strawberry, banana
And a heap of chocolate malt

My pizza's barely on the tray
But finally it fits
I hope it doesn't overcook
And shatter into bits

When it is out I take a bite
And my tasting buds go bong!
Why does this pizza taste bizarre?
Now where did I go wrong?

Judge's Comment

A humorous tale with good command of rhythm and rhyme.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary

Mert Akgun

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

Canvas

The canvas is coming from the sky,
It pushes the clouds to the side,
Then I see ...
A great big picture,
Coming to my eyes.

Some dogs, appear - barking, brownly,
Caterpillars crawling greenly
And butterflies, flying rainbows.

They might see me, lifted on golden wings,
Carrying some treasure,
To the dragonflies.

Then I will lie,
Beneath some tall trees.
For my own pleasure,
Under the sky of my canvas.

Judge's Comment

Beautiful images.

Helen Asfaw

Carlton Gardens Primary School, CARLTON VIC

The Scarves

What do you see?
Beautiful Jellyfish
Butterflies of colours
F
A
L
L
Down to the ground
And
The scarves drift
And
Move like a rainbow

Shiny as a the sun
I feel the rain come to the ground
And
The scarves go up and down
I can hear the wind
And
The scarves go up and down

And
When the sun comes out
The scarves look shiny
When the sun goes in, the scarves
They look like our reflection
In the mirror
The colourful magic scarves
Orange, green, orange, green
Is the prettiest thing I have ever seen

What do you see now?

Judge's Comment

A lovely picture of floating scarves.

Kaan Gulasi

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

Fast Revenge

Slowly the enemy crept in the bush,
Slowly the enemies were killed one by one.
Slowly the claymore sets,
Slowly the guns were ready.
Slowly the spotlights searched,
Slowly the enemy crept in the territory.
Slowly the snipers on the cliffs were ready and silent,
Slowly the enemy came closer and closer,
Slowly they were wiped out
Slowly the bodies lay in the bush.

Fast ran the soldier through the bush,
Fast ran the soldier to the helicopter.
Fast on the machine gun he started blasting,
Fast he crept in the shadows hiding,
Fast he took them all down to the ground,
Fast he tasted revenge.

Judge's Comment

Mature use of contrast, and a last line which says a lot.



Ty Wagenknecht

Keith Area School, KEITH SA

The Great Outdoors

Lurching the boat down on top of the ripples
Starting up the engine
Smell the old burning oil
as the old v8 sucks up the old petrol into the greasy pistons
Hearing the loud rev of the engine
Listening to the gurgling of the water in the exhaust pipes
The gears scream and squeal into position
Ready to go.
Gently push the accelerator
Slowly the front of the boat rises
We skim across the ripples

Judge's Comment

Engages all of the senses.

Matthew Kwon

St Vincent's Primary School, ASHFIELD NSW

They Deserve Respect

Those who
First came here
They deserve respect
Took good care of our land
They deserve respect
Got their land taken over by the Brits
They deserve respect
Settled on grass and sand
They deserve respect
Were brown from head to toe
They deserve respect
Liked to play the didgeridoo
They deserve respect
Had a flag of black, red and yellow
They deserve respect
Are proud of the red rock, Uluru
They deserve respect
They are the Aboriginals.

Judge's Comment

A lovely reconciliation poem, with good use of a refrain.



Isabella Portelli

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

Can You Paint The Wind?

Can you paint the wind?
The whistling sound it makes
When it goes through the trees
And rustles your hair.
Try to paint that on a canvas.

Can you paint love?
The feeling that you are being
When it speaks to you
And makes you feel so happy.
Try painting love on a canvas.

Judge's Comment

Simple yet thought provoking.

Christopher Morozoff

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

Mountain

I have had a taste of a mountain,
Like rockclimbing but higher,
Much higher.
It is dangerous -
The fear of falling down
Makes my heart stop.
There are strong vertical lines
Of solid rock, in front of me,
But my eyes are on the top -
On the white
Is it snow or ice?

Chris, will you make it?
What stopped you?
It is hard to find the grip
On the mountain.
.... Maybe
when I am more experienced

Judge's Comment

Takes the reader on the journey through doubt and challenge.



Kyle Carter

Farrell Flat Primary School, FARRELL FLATSA

Mum's Photo

Roaring around on my motorbike
Doing lots of tricks
My Mummy's taking photos
Click, Click, Click.

I like my mum's pictures
They are really cool
I would like to get a good one
To take and show at school.

Judge's Comment

Nice use of rhyme and rhythm in this little feel-good poem.

Junior Secondary

Erin-Rose Donohoe

Academy Of Mary Immaculate, FITZROY VIC

Inked Eagle

From the nib flows steady streams of feathers
Whisked away into sketchy clouds,
Feel the wind,
Lightly brushed over woodland pages.
The memories held within the eye,
Pressed hard back,
Exposing the intensity of the marauder mind,
Fixated down to where prey lies,
Cold.
Calculating.
Striking down.
Down towards thick inked lines shading the land below,
The tiny dotted creatures flee,
Disappear into dark cross hatches,
The folds and tears.
Escape from the marauder,
From death,
Away from hooked beak and twisted claws,
Reach out.
Rip through.
Break the transparent shield separating our world from its.
This is the freedom,
This is the art,
This is flight.

Judge's Comment

Intense images, and a brilliant concept, this poem brings the scene to life. The way the poem moves from the drawn landscape to the real is original and effective. Memorable.

Harriet Magee

Presbyterian Ladies' College, BURWOOD VIC

Black Horse

The Black horse watches me,
As I slowly walk towards him,
He looks me straight in the eye,
Making me feel small,
He looks so bold, but there is also softness,
In the corner of his eye.
I put out my hand,
He touches it with his nose,
Soft as velvet as I gradually move my hand,
Towards his back.
I talk to him quietly,
As I pause he whinnies lightly,
In my ear,
The sound makes me feel like the world has stopped.
His sweet smell fills my nose as I breath it in.
The horse gently rubs his head against me,
We were strangers to each other,
But now we feel,
Like we have known each other forever.

Judge's Comment

The quietness, the stillness, and the relation of horse and writer is very effectively portrayed. A lovely poem.

Yoshua Selvadurai

James Ruse Agricultural High School, CARLINGFORD NSW

"The Open Window" by Henri Matisse

A rectangle of speckled cobalt sky
 Framed by brilliant red window panes
 Outside, shimmering fragments of colour
 Inside, the cool gloom of the studio
 An empty canvas is stretched, poised
 Staring like a blank white eye
 Waiting for instruction, inspiration

But how do I capture this diaphanous
 Fluid moment and pin it to canvas?
 How do I paint the sensation of the soft
 Silky breeze, the yawning afternoon sky
 The sun leaking yellow into the sea
 The drunken thud of the boats at the pier
 The flickering petals in the flower pots?

A stroke of red paint, jabs of pistachio
 Splashes of mauve under washes of blue
 Suddenly the languid afternoon is transformed
 Frenzied brushstrokes suspend all thought
 Now the red is too strong, it overwhelms
*"Every new brushstroke diminishes the importance of
 the preceding ones,"* more viridian, more lilac
 Until *"balance, purity, serenity"* reigns

"I want art to have the effect of a good armchair"
 But is this enough? Shouldn't art change the world?
 Fragments of colour, snatches of patterns
 Effervescent light which spills out of life
 Onto the surface of the contented canvas
 Yes, it is enough, this pursuit of vision
 The shimmering moment that lasts forever

* Quotes by Henri Matisse are in italics. Source: "Notes d'un peintre," in *La Grande Revue*, 1908, pp 731-745, as translated and reproduced in HB Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art*, University of California Press, 1968.

Judge's Comment

Excellent use of words, an imaginative look at an artist at work

Lena Van Swinderen

Chapel Hill State School, KENMORE QLD

Osaka

Perhaps it is in vain
That I keep an Osaka fern in my window
With spiralling fronds that whisper
Softly, serene in the moonlight
I was inclined I think
To snatch at sunbeams to
Cradle impossibility to me
As the stunted trees clutch the cliffs
Every leaf straining to the ocean
I try to dance on boundaries
Try to touch another world
Once-
I stood in a cloud-filled forest
Mist curled from the ground
Verdant life sprang from all those fallen
Dead and once-splendid things
The dappled sun and shade
Scented all a peculiar intoxicating perfume
Sun on leaves and decay
For one moment
I held the forest's gaze
Eternal
So beautiful
And so achingly indifferent
I turned quickly, back to the cars
The roads, the garish smell of fish and chips
The Osaka came a day later
And like the forest
Somewhere within its leafy heart
It remains untouchable

Judge's Comment

I love this poem, and the way the fern stands for the rainforest, the ungraspable aspects of nature that we've lost. Well thought out, original, very impressive.

Luise Martin

Northern Beaches Secondary Colleges Mackellar Girls Campus, MANLY VALE NSW

Wildebeest

A lone wildebeest
Silhouetted against the fading sun
A spectrum of sunburnt, happy colour
The sun still shines rays of soft light,
But she too, is about to go to her bed in her star-spangled heaven
She has a last glimpse of her beloved grass,
Her red-streaked, crumpled paper sky
The wildebeest murmur softly,
They are tired too
As the sun sinks lower, they sink with her
And the mere wisps of clouds sigh ever so quietly
As the wind
Flicks them along with a lazy finger
And the sun sinks down, past the hills
And is gone

Judge's Comment

Beautiful imagery, a real sense of loss and sadness.

Elly Williams

Caringbah High School, CARINGBAH NT

The Lighthouse

She stood far out at sea on a rock,
With cliffs on either side,
She was as old as any lighthouse can be,
Tattered and torn by the tide.

She had been abandoned for many a year,
Thus how she has lasted the time,
She's been changed and shaped and moulded
Since she was in her prime.

Her paint had peeled and faded,
Weathered by the sun,
And the glass was gone from all her windows,
Every single one.

Her foundation was becoming weaker,
And rotten was the floor,
The dirt and dust was stacking up,
Behind her weathered door.

Her roof was now a high class home
For spiders, gulls and bats,
And the walls and cellars served as a home
For a family of rats.

The light she bore was extinguished,
For so long she had had no light,
And no boats came by this little cove;
For it was dangerous at night.

She stood through wind and rain and storms
For all those many years,
Being pushed and pulled and sprayed and splashed,
Despite of all her fears.

Then one windy afternoon,
The wind whispered "It is time",
And she fell like rain beneath the waves,
Leaving the world behind.

And to this day she lies there,
Feeling no hardship nor pain,
Dreaming, imagining her light keeper,
Coming at sunset once again.

Judge's Comment

Beautifully imagined, a lovely poem.

**Bethany Coulter**

Corpus Christi College, BATEMAN WA

Go Piece by Piece

Piece by piece the picture will grow,
How big will it get? Well no one knows,
It really is up to you I guess.
Life is a puzzle, go piece by piece.

Obstacles approach you everyday,
An object to stop you on your way,
Keep moving forward and don't give up.
Life is a puzzle, go piece by piece.

Family and friend will help you along,
Together you'll all stand strong,
You are joined at the hip and that way you'll stay.
Life is a puzzle, go piece by piece.

Your puzzle will grow, the end not in sight,
But you'll continue on with all your might,
It's a hard journey but the view is great.
Life is a puzzle, go piece by piece.

A picture is beginning to take its shape,
But it is still a mystery like a man in a cape,
You still learn lots about your life.
Life is a puzzle, go piece by piece.

The puzzle becomes extremely tough,
You don't know what to do, it's rough,
Keep on fighting till the end.
Life is a puzzle, go piece by piece.

You're getting closer to the end,
You've fixed all the pieces that you've had to mend,
Live your life till you can't no more.
Life is a puzzle, go piece by piece.

The final piece goes in just right,
Not too loose and not too tight,
You tell people who are in strife,
Life is a puzzle, go piece by piece.

Judge's Comment

This lovely rhyming poem utilises the extended image of life as a puzzle, with a well-wrought rhyme and rhythm pattern. The use of repetition to conclude each stanza is an effective technique creating a link between the different aspects of life and brining the poem together in an echo of the process of solving a jigsaw puzzle.

Senior Secondary

Jacqueline Krinda

Merewether High School, BROADMEADOW NSW

Hush

Saying goodbye
was easy.
Finding a place again
with; an old couch,
gushing wind,
telephone,
and
slightly damp sheepskin covers.
Our voices, clustered,
shuddering over
old times
bad jokes
a simple farewell
and a click.

But walking into a
bare room at night
whips a cover off
the desperation.
Glaring electric light
pinpoints the
fact-
there is nothing quite so tragic
as an empty kitchen.

Yet...
it stands there,
with
two hideous silhouettes.
Myself and 1am.

and this
 hush
the last thing left unsaid.

Judge's Comment

A life called up with a few intense images and well-chosen words; the sense of someone standing there bereft is palpable. A memorable, pleasing poem.

Erika Belchamber

Urrbrae Agricultural High School, NETHERBY SA

River

The river glitters ahead of me,
disappearing, appearing, a magic trick.
It is the snake hiding in the grass,
if grass was a forest of trees.
The bubbling water holds so many secrets.
I wonder what it has seen.
I wonder what it has been told,
by people so desperate
they cannot turn to anyone else.
Like you.

Fish dart beneath my feet,
so happy and oblivious of the world
that lies beyond their home.
I wish to be that carefree again.
But there is one thing I must do.
I search through my numerous pockets
finally finding a box.
Made of wood. Filled with ashes.
Concealing you from the world
and holding you back.

Tears glitter in the sunlight
that appears for you.
The wind picks up
and gently
gently
You float out of the box.
Sometimes landing in the river,
sometimes on the ground beside me.
You have been freed,
I have not.

I cast my eyes around
and latch onto a speck
of grey ash
twisting in the air.
It flies higher, higher
until I can see it no more.
I know now
somewhere you are flying free.

Judge's Comment

A lovely poem.

Marwa Al Abaiiaty

Preston Girls Secondary College, PRESTON VIC

Come Now

Crow come, devour me whole
Pick at these dainty ties
That so bind me to decency
Together we will spread these lies
We will afford no one leniency
Come now my Crow, come

Sparrow come, devour me whole
We'll peck at these ivory bones
Nothing left for the worms
It is but myth this thing of stones
It's with our words we conjure storms
Come now my Sparrow, come

Raven come, devour me whole
Mark my prey with your flight
May your sight bring forth fear
Keep them awake during night
With your cry at them leer
Come now my Raven, come

Judge's Comment

A strong poem with hypnotic rhythms and effective repetitions.
Impressive.

Ben Armstrong

The Hutchins School, SANDY BAY TAS

Under Black Bluff

Under Black Bluff,
Where silent waterfalls of dying cloud,
Plunge between brooding crags that claw at the dusk,
And dissolve into the unyielding forest.
While the precarious tarn rests uneasily,
Taunted by a shifting wind that dances through scrub
And caresses my legs with a deceitful smile.

Under Black Bluff,
Where plants cling like beggars
And conspire with looming walls of green,
Whose disapproving eyes watch from every angle.
Where the sky, abandoned by both night and day,
Is haunted by a melancholy glow,
That fills the dizzy void expanding before me.

Under Black Bluff,
Where the rocky monarch reclines, distant and indifferent;
Surveying his handsome estate,
The unnoticed intruder not worthy of his recognition.
For a moment, confidant of its privacy,
This place transforms, into something
Never meant for a human gaze.

Judge's Comment

Skillfully written, with a sure, confident use of rhythm.

Gavin Beams

Bendigo South East College, STRATHDALE VIC

Morbid Day

His woollen jumper i hold in my hands.
It smells strongly of that herbal
tea he used to drink as water.
Mint, i used to think it reeked.
I cannot comprehend what i have
just seen
Crowds of morbid faces. the music
did not fit the occasion. But alas he claimed it calmed him.
So it had been played.
The memories of the pond he
showed me.
My brother caught my first fish there.
I never did.
So unjust for those who loved him.
If he was here he'd scold me for moping,
i fold the jumper and leave.
Closing the door but never the memories.

Judge's Comment

I like the use of detail, building up an image of both the writer and the person lost. Moving and real.

Abigail Budiawan

Regents Park Christian School, REGENTS PARK NSW

The Grey and Faded Photograph, on the Wall Over There

Thrust forward by the ship, silver and cold, lips twist in disdain,
He is heralded by a grey ceiling and hard brown underfoot, while the
Ocean, frothing and black behind him,
Turmoils like homesickness, deep in his gut.

Crooked brown buildings, framed with rusty, ragged edges,
Line the busy, abandoned road.
He watches with undedicated curiosity – past him
people swarm, in tight, winding circles
Of shuffling feet and turned shoulder.

Oh sweet home! he murmurs,
Through lips wrapped in tendrils of blue, as wandering thoughts
scale across his eyes
Leaping from sunlight, to wide, green valleys,
To vast blue sea.
Different, he thinks, as different as blood and water,
Pouring into an open pit.

Circles drift toward him, swirling like the darting
Silver fish who swim as one.
But there, an inky black gap, hiding a comforting warm;
He seamlessly creeps forward
To seal his place.

Hidden within their shadows, he scuffs up streaks of dust
And they grumble, pale fingers poking,
Clawed nails digging, pushing, prodding,
Dragging filthy shoes down abandoned
Road, kicking smudged and callused feet
In heel and soul.

Blood and water, he remembers.

Salvation is elsewhere, and he leaves the chattering silence,
And heart wrenching coldness,
That rip at his clothes and cling to his wrists.
Salvation is elsewhere, and he throws himself
Upon its stake.

But the circles melt away, and he sits frozen: sifting useless grains
Through wide, open gaps,
Distorted by tiny transparent flecks of rain,
That have lingered on the camera lens.

Judge's Comment

Imaginative, clever and effective descriptions, and excellent poem.



Kayla Wilton

Ogilvie High School, NEW TOWN TAS

Pop

I remember you
So old and grumpy
That smoker's cough
The way you had that cheeky grin
Your smell was hard to explain,
Comforting, the smell of your favourite food,
The good old lamb shank.
Your stories I still remember,
Concreting tales, being amongst 'the boys',
Your stubbornness and refusal to give in,
Even challenging change and being featured in the Mercury.
I still see you on your bed with a rollie in your hand,
And your beard stained yellow from the smoke
You looked dead, almost as if your time was up,
But I knew you could fight it, you were my fighter.

Judge's Comment

A very moving poem, beautifully written, with a lovely use of detail.

Jack Burnham

Caloundra Christian College, CALOUNDRA QLD

Dispossession

The muddy, serpentine sprawl of river,
swelling, straining against its banks.
Breaching. Breaking. Breathing.

Cascading down potholed roads,
crashing against concrete gutters like knives. And faces
of brick; mottled and dead. Laughing.

Reaching the level, the city; the end.
Building up on itself, destroying all with itself.
Get washed away. Get soaked.

It's soul destroying, this is. When
you have to bail yourself out
of what used to be your home: your own.

Evicted by the very substance
that keeps life ticking over.
But the slave that once served you so well, is now

what laps at your feet and
erodes your resolve.
A dirty brown revolution. Flooding

your mind. Warping lintel and
doorframes. Blurring
the edges of photographs.

And even after the torrent
and fears have flowed away,
it remains, in soul and memory. Gnawing.

The walls of the past are now stained, and
silt from the river bed is settled and still
in the carpet. Squatting.

You can return, you can reside. You can even
hope and pray. But nothing can be the same again.
This is not your home. Not anymore.

Judge's Comment

This is one of the best poems in the competition. I like the build-up of detail, and the use of colloquial expression, 'It's soul-destroying, this is', which gives a sense of the human cost of the flood.

**Lewin Cary**

Cranbrook School, BELLEVUE HILL NSW

Riverhorse

Down by the riverbank,
A place to watch
The myriad swift horses in the water racing,
Tumbling over one another,
White manes thrashing through the light blue, churning up the
surface,
Teeth bared and brandished, gums taut, breathing jagged,
Slipping through the rocks and crevices,
Intent on their goal, never wavering,
Champing and stammering their cries to the sun,
Who answers with a flash of brilliance,
Unable to resist the summons of the call,
Lifting some of them into the air, passing into shimmering mist,
Light splayed through the droplets, all hues, colours and shades,
Iridescent spray forming in the air,
Alone merely a droplet within the ocean,
But together a creature that moves as one,
An unstoppable current, sweeping through the river,
Carrying on its back the tales of upstream to pass on to those in
front of them,
And as they run together they murmur,
They are the riverhorse

Judge's Comment

Excellent imagery, vivid and real, a great sense of movement

Isabel Mai

Presbyterian Ladies' College, BURWOOD VIC

The Drowned Disposition

When he removes his arms from around you, you cannot hear the crackling of the thunder, the street lights flickering, only the deafening silence of your heart, which ceases to tell you it is still pumping, keeping you safe with velvet vermillion. Perhaps this is how you find yourself clutching at your pearls, the ones he gave you when he took you to the school dance and did the twist in the middle of the floor. You don't even like pearls. The literary sense in you wants to think of this as a mere complication, because true lovers always find their way back to each other. Then awareness sets in and a match is lit, you think of controlling the sparks in the sky, growing ever-present in your pursuit to take it in your hand and spear it straight through him, though in reality, nature is only palpable when you are hopeless to the world, raining down and down, dragging you down with it. The truth is that you will just lie there, because he was the chest to cry on and the tenderness that you always needed.

Judge's Comment

The graceful rhythm of this poem, which matches perfectly the train of thought, is impressively handled; a confident, assured and effective poem.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary

James Bignell

Dalyellup College, Dalyellup WA

The Geek

Alone in the corner all by himself
The little boy weeps to himself
Being so alone is turning him into a shadow
A shadow that no one cares about
Cast aside like a dirty old rag
No one wants all needs

He sits outside his classroom
His brain works against him
He can only dream
He is many things
He can be funny yet no one laughs
He is sad and yet no one weeps

He talks yet no one listens
He screams yet no one whispers in his ear
His brain is in another world far, far away

Where life doesn't matter
He battles dragons
He rescues princesses
Dodging tongues of fire

When he comes back down to earth
He is looking up at his teacher
Who is red in the face?
From yelling at him to do his work

Judge's Comment

This poem takes you inside the mind of someone who is 'different' with empathy and well-chosen images and words.

Tina Green

Corrimal High School, CORRIMAL NSW

From The Sea

Crabs have lived in this shell
All cosy peace and quiet.
It's small, there is not much space for a crab.
A tiny twisted turtle shell.
Hard like concrete. Solid.
Bumpy.
Brown, white and the colour of mould.
Shaped like an eye.

This pointy-nosed shell is small
and easy to lose.
Skin and purple striped
as white lines
make it twist around itself.
The little hole is so the shell can breathe.

Oyster shell is strong.
A circle that can't be crushed.
Dull, dirty green like vomit.
Feels like dry skin
But shiny inside.
Patterned like fish scales.

Bone-like coral.
White curved sticks.
You can't even count how many holes it has.
Little human parts.
A claw.
A foot with a bone sticking out
And a hand waving goodbye.
Not living now.

Judge's Comment

Well observed, fresh and original

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

2011 Anthology

COMMENDED

Lower Primary

Upper Primary

Junior Secondary

Senior Secondary

Lower Primary

Matthew Elkins

Home School, KANDOS NSW

Sky Picture

God made a picture of the sea
dripping it down
into a rain cloud,
moving into a double-headed space worm.
Now it's gone.
It's going to storm today.

Judge's Comment

Wonderful images.

Spiders

Some spiders deserve their dinner
they make a better web
with spinnerets
fast like a cartweel
wrapping up in ten seconds
googely, boogely eyes
and long fangs.

Judge's Comment

Wonderful word choice for a fun yet clever poem.

Anthony Gilks

Nowra Anglican College, BOMADERRY NSW

Jelly Beans

One jelly bean
Two jelly beans
Three jelly beans
Slip into sleep
Slide into sleep
Slowly into sleep
I'm counting jelly bean sheep

Judge's Comment

A deceptively simple bedtime poem. Clever.



Shannen Gilmore

Hill End Public, HILL END NSW

Blue Bonnet

Little bird of black and blue,
Body bopping away he flew.
Spring and Summer he comes around,
He makes a little chirping sound.
When he arrives he makes me smile,
In the plum tree he stays for a while.

He watches his wife Jenny Wren,
He waits in the plum tree for her and then.
Night falls and all is dark,
He sends out a call and gets her remark.
She comes happily bobbing along,
Singing a friendly chirping song.

They fly in circles around the bird bath,
I sit and watch them on the narrow path.
When the cold of Winter comes I say goodbye,
I give a sad and lonely sigh.
I know Blue Bonnet will come again,
I hope he brings his little Jenny Wren.

Judge's Comment

This happy poem jumps and flits like the bird it describes, with excellent use of rhyme and rhythm.

Lamayha Hart

Newcastle East Public School, NEWCASTLE NSW

Treasure

Through the windy waves
Whispering to me
Bumping off the rocks
Like a roller coaster
In my old ship I go.

Onto the sand as smooth
As a snake
I go through the chattering jungle
The leaves are falling on me
Like howling rain
Under the whooshing palm tree
Through the crumbling bush
Stomping! Stomping!
Buried treasure
Just for me

Judge's Comment

A nice little poem which takes the reader on an adventure, with good use of poetic techniques including onomatopoeia, simile and personification, creating vivid images which bring the scene to life for the reader.



Sarah Ho

Milgate Primary School, EAST DONCASTER VIC

The Little Robin

As the sun rises up
And the night goes away
The flowers shoot high
And faintly say "Good day."
The gentle little robin
Soars high in the sky
And perches on my windowsill
As I feed it some rye.
It warbles so sweetly
As the sun goes down
Goodbye little robin
As he flies into town.

Judge's Comment

A joyful poem, with rhythm reflecting the subject matter.

Amy Leotta

St Charles Primary School, RYDE NSW

**Autumn
(haiku poem)**

Rustling and crunching
Blanket covering the ground
Orange and red leaves

Judge's Comment

An excellent example of the haiku form.



Pippini Moseley

Home School, BRIDGEWATER SA

Pictures

When I draw pictures
I think of them in my mind
Then I put them on sheets of white.
It is exciting
When I draw
I paint paintings and patterns
Circles and swirls
My hand moves like a tree swaying in the breeze,
Like autumn leaves falling,
Crayon colours my page.
Houses and people
Butterflies and flowers
Love hearts and faces
And me.

Judge's Comment

A lovely exploration of the contest theme.

Cody Schalhammer

Mowbray College JS Patterson Campus, MELTON VIC

Volcano

Red
Hot
Explosive, erupting
Dangerous, hazardous.
Fiery
Scary
Frightening, burning
Volcano.

Judge's Comment

A vividly descriptive list poem.

Upper Primary

Finn Ball

Alstonville Public School, ALSTONVILLE NSW

The Call of the Cassowary

A hollow rumble,
Seared leaves scrunch
Stepping through the fog -
The Cassowary.

Charcoal feathers gleam,
Golden casque shines.
Wattle deep ruby -
The Cassowary.

In its wake are its babies,
Small and cute
Pursue in their mother's footsteps -
The Cassowary.

Dog jumps,
Machine rumbles
Car speeds -
At the Cassowary.

Mother defends,
Babies cry
Toenails fly -
The Cassowary.

Dog rips,
Mother cries out
Babies are gone -
The Cassowary.

On a desolate plain,
All alone,
Mother slowly fades away
But before she does she lets out a final call
Then disappears into the fog -
The Cassowary

Judge's Comment

A vivid depiction, with clever use of repetition.

Joshua Bishop

Buxton Public School, BUXTON NSW

Whales

These magnificent creatures gliding through
the murky waters
Their gloomy shadows follow them
in amongst the mountainous waves.

Judge's Comment

Uses just a few lines to create a vivid picture.



Alec Cocking

St Michael's Primary School, MANILLA NSW

Harmony

My Aboriginal community
Has helped me through a lot.
We've had some really hard times,
Some are best forgot.
We've learnt much from our Elders,
They teach us of the past.
They go on for generations
And the stories will always last.
I'm an Aboriginal person
And I can say it loud.
I walk with people of the past
And for that I'm proud.
Our history is often marked,
With sacrifice and terrors
But Australia has come and grown
And learnt from her past errors.
Tomorrow will be our future
Built hand in hand together.
With reconciliation
And harmony forever.

Judge's Comment

Well structured, exploration of an important topic.

Phillip Craig

Normanhurst West Public School, THORNLEIGH NSW

Took Them Away

We took these people away
But sorry's hard to say
We took the children away
They had no say.
We took them away.

We took their homes
Mother, father gone,
For a long time gone
Gone away...
But sorry's been hard to say.

Judge's Comment

Uses repetition to increase impact of an important message.



Sophia Mitchell

Pymble Ladies' College, PYMBLE NSW

Sand

Sand is like
a glittering carpet of stars
shimmering in the summer sun.

Sand is like
a scorching hot pavement
which burns my feet when I race across it.

Sand is like
a camp ground for scuttling crabs
digging deep to hide from screeching gulls.

Sand is like
a stage full of ballerinas
twirling and leaping in the whistling wind.

Sand is like
wet squidgy clay
which moulds between my toes when I paddle.

Sand is like
an enormous playground
where happy children build amazing castles and moats.

Sand is like
a land of golden hills
rolling gently into the turquoise sea.

Judge's Comment

A series of clever images creating a lovely picture of the beach.



Jane Tin

St Dymphna's School, ASPLEY QLD

Capturing War

They sacrificed their lives
In a battle which they fought
Courage filled their hearts
Victory they sought

They experienced aching agony
They faced their darkest fears
They went through heartbreak
They poured out tears

Death was at their door step
Yet they fought with all their might
With their bravery and their courage
They put up a gruesome fight

Nothing can describe
The price of which it cost
For the freedom of our nation
Our soldiers' lives were lost

Our country they've done proud
What mighty wars they've braved
Through pain and grief and sorrow
Our country they have saved

We will remember them
Every minute, everyday
Lest we forget
Our nation is proud to say

Judge's Comment

A wonderful poem on the theme.

Zael Knill

Grange Primary School, ADELAIDE SA

Metaphor the Sea

The sea is a black panther
Sly and smart
When looking for food
I t is relentless and rapid
With its deadly claws
And padded paws
Hour upon hour it stalks its prey
Watching the shore not far away.

When the night wind howls
I t bays back over the cliffs
Pacing and growling
While the ocean foam
Froths from its rabid mouth

Judge's Comment

A powerful extended metaphor creating a vivid picture.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary

Theophilus Din

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

Hidden Treasures

As blue as a sapphire,
As pink as a pearl,
As sparkling as a diamond,
As green as an emerald.
As aqua as lapis lazuli,
As golden as a topaz,
As red as a ruby,
As clear as an opal,
As purple as an amethyst.

As precious as hidden treasures.

Judge's Comment

A simple treasure box of colour.



Nyachou Gawar

South Street Primary School, MOE VIC

Boys

Boys
Lazy Boys
Lazy Dirty Boys
Naughty Dirty Lazy Boys
Rude Naughty Dirty Lazy Boys
Bad Rude Naughty Dirty Lazy Boys
Unusual Bad Rude Naughty Dirty Lazy Boys
Smelly Unusual Bad Rude Naughty Dirty Lazy Boys
Messy Smelly Unusual Bad Rude Naughty Dirty Lazy Boys

Judge's Comment

A cleverly simple cumulative poem.

Joseph Guida

St Anthony's School, WANNEROO WA

On The Farm

Cock-a-doodle-doo
Woof, woof
Moo, moo
Vroom, boom, boom
Goes the tractor.
Drip, drip...
The water from the pump.
Clack, boom, boom, clack...
Trees crashing in the rain storm.
Baa, baa, baa
Whack, whack, whack
Boing, boing, boing
Splash, splash, splash
In the puddles.
Bang, bang, bang.
Meeeoowwww!

Judge's Comment

A fun cacophony of sound.



John Maxwell

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

The Fountain

Rushing waters,
Crashing down.
Crystal clear
As the sky.
Changing colour
With the sky.
Drops down
On its back,
Rolls and splashes.

Judge's Comment

A simple yet effective description.

Katherine Allen

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

Why

Why are the oceans and seas so huge?
And why sky so blue by day?
Why are the forests and deserts so beautiful?
And the stars in the night sky so bright?

Why are there thousands of children in poor places?
And why do they die of disease and hunger?
Why do some people feel sad and suffer?
And sometimes lose their way?

Why do people fall in love?
And why do others never marry at all?
Why was I born? Why am I here?
I really want to know more.

So many questions twirl in my head.
Around and around all the time.
I wish I had all the answers to life.
But so far all I've got is this rhyme.

Judge's Comment

Good use of questioning and repetition to engage the reader.

K-6 Powell

Koorringal Public School, WAGGA WAGGA NSW

Pictures in Play

People can make
Interesting
Creations which can
Tell a tale.
Unique artworks
Ready to inspire
Everyone who sees them.

Imagination unlimited,
Nothing too big or too small.

Precious memories
Loving thoughts
Are given freely to all, for
You to receive.

Judge's Comment

A clever composed acrostic poem.

Junior Secondary

Grace Moujalli

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

The Sands of Time

The sands of time
In my back yard
Sparkle and shimmer each night
Like little storytellers.

And when I look up,
They gaze at me
With cat-like eyes,
For what feels like nine lives,
Until I fall asleep
Wrapped up in memories.

Judge's Comment

A thoughtful poem with good imagery.



Marnie Donovan

OLMC, PARRAMATTA NSW

Summer

The morning grows into a shimmering day;
warm and still.
Cicadas shrill throughout the long toasted grasses.
The heavy headed wattle and tired eucalypts stand still.
The bees murmuring over the wild flowers beyond
the tiny sculptured lawn scorched under the sweltering sun,
and the thirsty hydrangeas parched.
As the dried wooden cottage stands steadfast,
lonely and isolated.
The hot wind whispers,
to which only the house hears.

Judge's Comment

Sets a mood with well-chosen words and images.

Melissa Allcroft

*Northern Beaches Secondary Colleges – Mackellar Girls Campus,
MANLY VALE NSW*

The Lake House

Could be called home,
It was once a young house
A new and unexplored journey about to take part
Of course the house had a feel
Of excitement and adventure
Warming our hearts with its radiance.
Waves crashing, birds and laughing at rise
Music, chatting and laughing at set
Generations grow in this house,
As do the memories.
The lake house may be a fun holiday
But also experiences peaceful reaching moments,
And when the all the lights turn off
Something magical takes place,
Something that you don't get to see often
Venture down to the lake
And see the magic in the water as it sparkles
And glows blue with a touch of soul,
The Milky Way up above pours through
Our imaginations and the night settles
With the gift of company,
And you don't question the saying,
Could be called home.

Judge's Comment

A memorable poem.

Clara Borg

Academy Of Mary Immaculate, FITZROY VIC

Graffiti

In the dead of night they surface.
One vigil eye cast behind,
The other already sweeping over
The contours and curves of the city

Like an artist admiring his muse:
The city's delicate ridges,
Prickly wired fences
Her tangled cable limbs
And her millions of flickering blue eyes.

They work swiftly,
The exhilaration, the danger, the rush,
Their minds racing as they gather their cans and paints
Their hands stained with lead
Colour blossoming at their fingertips

Like the soft touch of silk,
It caresses the brick
Spurting vibrant emotion
The wall blushes a deep red, fades a serene blue

Their dreams fly above the navy skies
Scattering peach-coloured swallows
Throughout the clouds
And silky ravens trapped within steel cages of night

They spill their hearts
Into the city,
They fling their souls
Into every corner and crevice
And by morning they are gone

And when the sun rises,
The light will illuminate
The intricate beauty of what
They have left behind.

Judge's Comment

Great images and use of language.

Jami Clark

Emmaus Christian College, SOUTH PLYMPTON SA

The Afghan Girl Behind The Picture

Do you see the pain in her hard, frightened eyes?
Can't you feel the permanent hardness in her stone set face?
Do you know the reason behind her cold features?

Why does she only dream of safety?
Of food, shelter and water?
Can we begin to understand her life?
Does she wish for a life like ours?
Why is her world full of hurt?
And ours full of pleasures?
Can we begin to imagine how much her life has changed?
How she has to live in fear for herself, her family, her friends, her world?

How long will it take you to realise, see or understand?
Can you see there's something more than just a picture?

Judge's Comment

Thoughtful and compassionate.

Beth Downing

Campbell High School, AINSLIE ACT

In The Wake of a Dream

Clock hands fall towards midnight,
As time tumbles in on itself.
My little room's so small now,
As I,
Dreaming with my eyes wide open,
Hang fairy lights and paper lanterns,
An ethereal, haunting glow.
Enchantingly beautiful.
Fingers trace the weathered map,
Sliding their way across France and Britain.
I'll go there.
I'll stand there.
Right there.
And a dream will come true.
Maybe I'll be changed,
Maybe I'll reinvent myself,
From all the buttons, stones and pieces of wool,
Left in the wake of my storm,
And find a treasure waiting there.
Anything is worth this dream;
there is nothing I would trade it for,
no matter the aftermath.
But will there be aftermath at all?
"Aftermath" means sadness or misery,
Pain and tears.
But this dream means joy and wonder,
Marvels and brilliant things.
Surely somewhere I can find
A better word for a dream,
And all it leaves behind.
Ask me again when I'm standing on that map,
I think you'll find
I'll have just the word.

Judge's Comment

An interesting memorable poem.

Saskia Heather

Ogilvie High School, NEW TOWN TAS

The Old Guitar Case

The old guitar case,
Battered and bruised,
Contains secrets of my past,
And all things that have a place in my heart.
If you dare venture under my bed, you will see it.
Memories seeping out, threatening to break free,
Though locks strain to hold them in.
I open my case, once in a while,
And as I hold the special objects in there,
I feel a sense of reassurance and security.
The things in there would be worthless to anyone else;
Old baby teeth, blurry photo's that didn't make it to the album,
Childhood toys and 'abstract' paintings I created in kinder.
But to me, the memories bring smiles and tears,
And also laughter, as I look at the cute letters I got from my friends
when I was small.
'Saskia, you're my bestest friend in the world, and I really mean it'.
The next day we wouldn't like each other.
But I guess that's how friendship worked back then.
The old guitar case used to contain an old guitar.
I never played the guitar, but found the case to be useful.
In it, I put the most worthless, unnecessary things,
Which hold the biggest place in my heart.

Judge's Comment

The details bring the past to life; a well-thought out poem.

James King

Rangeway Primary School, GERALDTON WA

Going to War

A plasticine figure
a clay ANZAC digger

With moulded lace boots
and a gun that he shoots

Dead soldiers on the ground
some people will never be found

It is in an art display
reliving the memories of that day

He was one person who died there
upon a mountainous hill, somewhere

I can imagine it, going to war
washing up on a foreign shore

Climbing against a blue background
khaki uniforms would be surely found

Snipers picking them off one at a time
Such a waste after an exhausting climb

You had to bury them before they smell
now that would have been a living hell

living there for a few years
blood shed, and also tears

Being evacuated from their land
boots, surely, would be covered in sand

Judge's Comment

An original idea, well written.

Betty La

Academy Of Mary Immaculate, FITZROY VIC

The Night Is Not Your Enemy

The Night – she lingers in hazy shadows,
cast over her when The Day gleams with arrogance.
She works modestly – being so humble in nature,
and tip-toes across your lawn, glides onto you front step,
And ... waits ...

She waits until the sun subsides,
So that it can be her time to steal the show...
But what's the use - the audience is ready to withdraw.
She picks up a handful of stars anyway,
scatters them across the curtain of black velvet sky,
and hangs up the moon.
She sings a song through rustling leaves.

Her breath is cool and crisp, but it seeps through people's skin.
So they recoil. Back into their homes. Back into their beds.
They stop acknowledging her. They fear her.
They worry about the mystifying darkness she brings,
The sounds she promotes: wise owls, neighbourhood felines,
And rowdy, laughing teenagers:
Drunk on euphoria,
(and some pink champagne from a friend's eighteenth)

So when people are afraid, they switch on the light,
Flickering, it spoils her performance.
And Day takes over again, although artificially
(60 watt bulb, lamp stand from an IKEA store)
Then he goes; so The Night soothes her people as they sleep.

As seven in the morning arrives eagerly,
The Night; well, she backs away. So Day can take all the credit.
Whilst her work is unappreciated... waved away with gnarled,
dismissive hands.
The Night resumes her lingering
Within the boastful aura of The Day.
And ... waits ...

The Night is not my enemy.
It is not hers, or his,
Or theirs, or ours.
The Night is not your enemy.

Judge's Comment

Interesting images, original idea

Ryan Lowbridge

Nowra Anglican College, BOMADERRY NSW

Mining Days

A blast, a boom, a haze of dust
Oceans, Sand Rigs or Trucks
Rumble, splash, whoosh or roar
Coal, metal iron ore.

Buzz of a drill, just like a bee
Bang on stone, like a crashing tree
Opals, Diamonds, copper and gold
Risk is high, you have to be bold.

An angry ocean growls at the rig
A greedy lorry steals shale from the dig
The waves are determined to rattle the crew
Huge wheels move swiftly to see the day through.

Gold was the prize of yesteryear,
She could cause the heart to flutter
But oil whooshed himself right in
to knock gold to the gutter.

Faces black, black as night
Helmets on, secure and tight
Knock on wood and a clap for luck
Tags moved to 'safe', no miner unstuck!

Judge's Comment

Good choice of words, vivid images. I like the originality of this poem

Emma Osborne

Paracombe Primary School, PARACOMBE SA

This Is Winter

Silently and slowly I wander.
Cold cruel wind blows in my face.
The last of the crisp, colourful autumn leaves blow around my
frozen body.
My feet crunch against the frosty, fresh grass.
The weak watery sunlight shines feebly through the grey,
gloomy clouds, heavy with rain.
I feel a flash of the sun's comforting, but colourless warmth,
Everything looks different.
Branches that were once laden with soft green leaves now look
like skeletons rattling in the wind.
The pond is covered by chunks of cold ice, and soon it will be
completely still and frozen.
Apart from the sound of my footsteps, everything is silent.
All the birds are sheltered safely in their nests, too tired and
cold to sing.
This is winter.

Suddenly the silence is shattered and the solitude is broken.
The clouds burst and icy rain buckets down from above.
I think there might have been some hail.
I dash for cover.

I sigh contentedly as I enter the warm and rosy living room,
hanging my jacket up and wiping chunks of hail out of my wet
hair.

A bright fire crackles merrily in the fireplace.
I wrap my freezing hands around a steamy cup of hot cocoa.
I pull aside the curtains and peer out the frosty window.
It looks cold and cruel, but I'm warm and comfy inside.
This is winter.

Judge's Comment

Good imagery and descriptions.

Shae Potter

Sunshine Beach State High School , SUNSHINE BEACH QLD

Blood Sky

Time, show me your doors, portals, archways.
Captivate me in your essence,
Infinitely, always.
Teach me your experiences, knowledge, wisdom.
Fold me in your dimensions,
infinitely, in the kingdom

Time, find me a snare, trap, lure.
Cultivate me a galaxy,
Infinitely, azure.
Paint me a picture, photo, drawing
Fade me a blood sky,
Infinitely, a warning.

Judge's Comment

An assured and well-written poem.

Clare Pryor

Home School , BENALLA VIC

Loss

Something parted the grass with a flash of black –
I see it now, in my mind's eye;
Undulating coils, coming back.
But Charlotte only dozed, gazing at the sky –
"one hour more!" came a whisper on the wind
While time its hours but slowly spun;
But the time had come, and Charlotte woke;
The snake recoiled, and then it struck!

The coiling serpent swift passed by,
But Charlotte crawled to the steps to die.
Her blind eyes set to the dimming house,
Her deaf ears cocked to hear a voice.

Is it a fairytale, is it a dream?
Is it not what it does seem?
Only a waving of the grass afar;
The grave, lit by a single star,
Remains, a solemn fearful testimony
To what has happened, and what may be...
Daring us to believe the unbelievable...
While in our hearts we hold the memory of her fidelity.

For we buried her in a grassy grave-
A faithful dog in her resting place laid;
The toil of our hands – we offer our best,
Near to that whither she looked, even in death.

Judge's Comment

The first verse is especially good; such good use of words and descriptions, and a great sense of loss (so aptly titled).

Isabella Somerville

Kennington Primary School, LONGLEA VIC

Making Pictures

Paint is splashed on the floor on walls
Yet the class is still
All engrossed in their own private world
Teacher doesn't care,
Boy with a bruised face paints
Angry slashes of red and black forming a looming figure
Girl's skin and bone arm
Lies across a collage of perfection
Boy paints on the table
Scrawling obscene images
He can never hope to achieve
Girl sits in corner alone
Gazing out the window
Paper blank but for a tiny red leaf
Hope

Judge's Comment

An interesting thought completely expressed.

Bekky Reeves

North Haven Schools , NORTH HAVEN SA

Secret Tears

I sit in my favourite arm chair,
And stare out of the window,
Watching the Remembrance Day parade,
Marching down the street; proudly.
Bad memories fill my head,
Full of horror and grief; anguish.
I refuse to remember.
Unlike my war comrades,
Who are amongst the ones crying tears of sorrow.
This is why I refuse,
To remember the way the guns fired overhead,
Bullets narrowly missing their target, me, everytime.
The way I felt watching grown men cry for their mothers as they
passed onto the other side.
Tears start to swell in my eyes,
I let them fall onto my clasped hands.
For the first time since that horrible war,
I let myself remember.
The determination, the bravery, the courage.
No one was trying to be the hero,
But they all were,
In their own way.
The tears fall more freely now,
I hear the last post play.
The minute silence.
"Next year," I tell myself, my voice thick with emotion.
Next year, I will walk with my loyal comrades,
With the slight limp that I earned from the bullet that finally met its
target.
Next year, I WILL remember.
Lest we forget.

Judge's Comment

Original and vivid.

Veronica Sebesfi

Abbotsleigh , WAHROONGA NSW

First Mango of the Season

Finally
The seasons have come full circle
And mangoes are once again gracing supermarket shelves
With their comfortable, round presence.

The first mango of summer is always special
I have waited all year for this.
Whether to 'porcupine'
or 'scoop' -
That is the question
Each mouthful carefully savoured.
Then the sweet seed
(Table manners a distant memory)
The nectar-juices running down my bare arms
Only to be licked back up again
This is a pleasure
A privilege
Which can only ever be enjoyed
In summer.

Judge's Comment

Lovely description, gives the sensual feeling of eating a mango.

Senior Secondary

Hamile Abdufatah

Coffs Harbour High School, COFFS HARBOUR NSW

Mama Africa

Africa, Africa, Africa,
Oh, Mama Africa,
How long will your children cry?
How long will they leave their motherland?

Sudden wars, crimes and political instability
Becomes the daily living life.
Sombre moods and death,
Becomes no stranger, rather part of the family.

Africa, Africa, Mama Africa!
Gun shots and bombs
Are your children's alarms,
Jerking them back to cruelty.

Floods of tears are formed daily,
Children and innocents die every day,
Vibrant smiles are forbidden to visit them,
Even in celebrations, mourning is the only option.

Oh Mother, your land is rich,
Yet hunger reduces you,
Minerals you have, rich you are,
But, Oh Mama, poverty is our only reward.

Happiness is a stranger,
Sadness and sorrows,
Guide our way to bloodshed.
Oh, Mama Africa, help your pitiful children.

Judge's Comment

The refrain of the words 'Mama Africa' help make this lament memorable and compelling; a poem sure to inspire empathy and compassion.

Sofia Cabral

Oxley College, CHIRNSIDE PARK VIC

When the World Floods

When the world floods You turned to look at me Rather slowly, As if someone held your head in their hands Turning it against your will, As if the air was thick as tar. Your eyes locked with mine And for a moment We swam together in a wave Of something like shock. You held the phone ever loosely As though it was miles away. It fell to the floor and hit rock bottom and with it, So did you. I watched dumbfounded as you dropped In a crumpled heap. Decades of burdens Cascaded to the dusty floor Leaving trails of sobs And half muttered words That I fruitlessly endeavoured to decipher On my knees I held you unhinged to see you so. I sputtered out a recurring "what happened?" Like a broken record But my desperate words fell on ears Dead to the world. Then you stretched out your hand The whole earth shaking with you. Taking the phone you nudged it into my hand and collapsed again to my shoulder. The words on the screen took shape before my eyes And the screws in my head twisted and turned Until my world wouldn't move any more. I heard no sound Except for my battering ram of a heart. For hours we sat there, Backs against the groaning wooden door, Heaving and gasping For air. You looked at me again And we swam once more. The next day we all stood there The wind beating against our faces As we swam, Around that polished marble box Of his ashes. The world is all water now. We haven't even a boat. We swim for ever and ever I am exhausted. Hope stands alone in the desert In a place where there is no water. But noone ever told us where to find it When the water is all we see. And so we are still looking, We are all still searching For a sign, For just one glimpse Of dry land.

Judge's Comment

I like the rhythms and images in this, and the use of the second person narration.

Nicola Berry

Marist Regional College, BURNIE TAS

Love's Cruel Keep

I cling to jagged pieces
Of the same mistake made twice
Wishing that you would love me over again
And though I plead my soul as payment
It will never be the same
You left me as broken shell
Our together, dead
If only I was as well
I beg sweet release
From love's cruel keep
And the memory of our fire

Judge's Comment

An effective, short poem



Maia Churchill

Willetton Senior High School, WILLETTON WA

The Untitled

'Modern' days.
Nothing but a world of mindless babble from the mouths of (mostly) educated people about the same ol' prejudice subjects, constantly repeated through a thousand different eyes.
A pitiful world of brainwashed thought and deep-fried opinion that disgusts me in such a way that if even a single fibre was out of place, I would no longer be sure nor content with my predicament. As if I too am lost without the guidance of the overly-worshipped Gods of pointless desire and self-inflicted humility.
It's sickening, yet somehow comforting.
Heart-warming.
Contradictory.
Surreal.
These words I use so often, yet utterly despise as they leave such an unholy sweetness in my mouth, like a revenge before it rebounds back onto ones self 10-fold.
Yes. Such nicotine hatred.
As easy to sin and not feel any form of repentance as it is to cough out the smoke of a cigarette. It is such a shame.
A sorrow.

A wasteland.

A desert in the fabrics of time and what we call space, as it flows, twists and bends like a ribbon in a gale, creating such senses of déjà vu and supposedly unexplained premonitions that we mock and tease like a child in the school yard who's too metaphorically small to set any sort of trend.

The child who will change this world and be shot for it, while the ex-giants with their own tainted hands hold the same gun to their heads in their own impure regret.

Another victim of the morale rainbow whose sight, though so lovely to behold, is not but another example of man's definition of comeliness.

Of man's colourful (though highly inaccurate) priorities.

Oh such sadness.

Such desperate, bone-crushing sadness of some old-time, deceptive form that only the blind can truly see beyond.

And as the history books are written in the driest blood, you can already hear the mocking laughter of our not-so-distant descendants.

They laugh at us.

Our perfect dystopia.

Our perfect, modern days.

Judge's Comment

Good use of words, an effective ending.

Serena Davies

St Michael's Collegiate, HOBART TAS

Amen

I wonder if, in a darkened flat in
Hiroshima,
An old woman is folding
A thousand paper cranes
Again, and wishing
That the water would go back
To where it came from.
And I wonder, is there anyone in
Fukushima,
Who, to this day, believes that
Chemistry is just for
Classrooms and hot love?
Blackboards and crushes were swept
Away with the drowned.

Judge's Comment

A memorable poem, good use of words and images.

Veronicka Devlin

Hobart College, HOBART TAS

Detached

Her bedroom is another world
Detached

Big windows
Sunlight streaming through
Portals to the outside world

Table groaning beneath the weight of book and
Paper piled skywards
Chests glittering with trinkets

Two stern, white cupboards
Sentries standing vigil
Always watchful

Book upon book
A colourful mess
Crammed into the shelves

Bunk beds squatting against the wall
Pillows scattered across the linen
Soft, so soft

In the privacy and seclusion
A figure curled in a nest
Book in hand

She floats on the magic of the words
Leaving reality, stepping into another world

Judge's Comment

Good use of words, effectively concluded

Nakita Dub

Hobart College, HOBART TAS

The Lucky Country

Three years ago they let him in here.
Sat him down.
Told him, 'You're lucky, mate.'
And laughed.
'The lucky country, right?'
When they told him he was allowed in here,
He didn't weep.
Or smile.
He just nodded a lone tear down his face.
Repeating something inside,
'So lucky. So lucky, mate.'
Then he left.
His heart in his hand,
Ready to give it to this new place.

It took them ten years to process him.
To package him up.
All done and dusted.
They took his name.
Gave him a number.
Took his dignity.
Gave him a cell.
And there he waited.
While they shuffled up their papers.
And then did it again.
And again.
No worries mate.
She'll be apples.
I mean, fair dinkum, right?
Boat people are not people.
Right?

A year after they let him in here,
He draped a flag around him.
Like everyone else did.
Australia Day.
He smiled.
The sun smiled.
But everyone else didn't.
Instead they ripped the flag from him.
Laughed and jeered.
Told him to go back home.
And he nodded a lonely tear down his face,
Singing something inside,

'For those who've come across the seas,
We've boundless plains to share.'
His heart in his hand.
He dropped it on the street.

One more present.
For the lucky country.

Judge's Comment

The short lines bring out the feeling of disillusionment; an effective poem.

Jacinta Evans

Townsville Grammar School, NORTH WARD QLD

I Beg to Differ

[Abstract]

I shy away from you as I would a needle
I swear though you're nowhere near as unpleasant
(I swear)
Dripping and shining medical green as the nurse's lips move
Slow and silent.
This won't hurt a bit.

How we all beg to differ, to widen our eyes and tug on our tongues,
To refuse and walk away, out into the summer,
Gleaming sea-glass blue and waiting.
 To be painfree...

But instead, we tense our muscles and wait for the injection,
A pinprick, an infiltration,
 a beginning
 an ending

Anything to break the rhythm of feet against sidewalks,
The waves of words against our minds.

Those nurses spoke too soon,
Clouded our eyes with yellow promises
And too-quick smiles
As the sun curls into the night,
And days become months...
 (you'll fade)
And I'll follow you into non-existence.

New Years come and gone
In champagne rocket sprays of song,
Flurries of kisses under soft stage lights,
Somber hellos, drunken goodbyes,
All those vacant words
 and
wasted time.

So even the best of us are left
with ourselves,
 within ourselves
on clean bathroom floors,
Mumbling our holy books and nursery rhymes
As we drift off
 into
voiceless sleep.

Judge's Comment

I like the words and the rhythms of this, which are hypnotic, like the subject matter perhaps?

**Lucy Edmont**

*Northern Beaches Secondary Colleges - Mackellar Girls Campus, MANLY VALE
NSW*

Daybreak

Here I am;
Just me and this world.
Watching the silken ribbon unwind across the sky;
Rolling, and rolling like a wave that shall not die.
Then with the sharp, shooting radiance of daybreak,
The whole earth seems to illuminate.
I stand in the crumbling light of Uluru
As the amber light pierces the crystal blue.
The universe is twisted from sheets of clay,
And amongst it all, the rocks still stay
Still and silent,
As if statues upon the sunburnt sand;
A rushed artist and his disconnected hand.
For a moment, I am blinded by the crimson earth,
Vivid, like blazing flames in the hearth.
I have no limitations; a child once more.
Courage renewed and strength to explore.
I slither from reality like the snake of the Dreaming,
And through new eyes, I see life with meaning.
Here I am, in the streaming light of Uluru,
Mind detached. Soul brand new.

Judge's Comment

Excellent descriptions; a beautiful poem.

Nicole Flax

Moriah College, QUEENS PARK NSW

Posed

In borrowed shirts, one dismal day
We posed against a wall of grey
Then in a flash, eternalized
Your spirit slipped away

Now all I have to fill the void
Are thumbnails of the paths destroyed
The people we once were, encased
Within a faded Polaroid

Our arms were prearranged "just so"
Our pose mimicked a famed tableau
Our smiles were painted mockeries
Of trends established years ago

I look at us, from head to heel
Our love was simple, quaint, ideal
But how can this be you and me
If not a single inch is real?

I wish they'd snapped a candid shot
Of every flaw and beauty spot
For now your laugh, your smile, your voice
Are bits of you that I forgot

Oh take me back to golden sand
And running, swimming, hand in hand
When every dusk was ours alone
And every night was grand

Although you loved me, kept me calm
And never dreamed to curse or harm
Your legacy is three by three
It fits within my palm

I hold my memories of the past
So small and flat and fading fast
And wish that photo of us, posed
Would not have been our last

Judge's Comment

A well-constructed poem with a beautiful rhythm

Tom Hawthorne

Kincumber High School, KINCUMBER NSW

I Sit Here

I look out to sea as the sun sets in vibrant colours of red and orange, no...
The wind blows like god's sweep of a brush sweeping destruction, no...
I search my mind thinking about ways to start off a poem but...
I just end up with a bin overflowing with scraps of words

I sit here playing percussion on my desk,
tapping and tapping and tapping but nothing comes to mind
This is just a distraction
I have gnawed the end of my pencil to a point like a beaver
A pin drops and rattles loudly on the large wooden desk

As I sit here I register the sound of bush turkeys rustling in the backyard
I know that they would've taken half the garden out
As I day dream for what seems like a minute or two when half an hour has passed
The longer I sit the more things I notice about this plain room

I sit here for hours in this room that is as white as a snow cave, like someone has dipped it in a bucket of white paint
I sit here frustrated
I sit here determined
I sit here now with a poem.

Judge's Comment

A good idea, well executed. Nice work!

Jacqueline Krinda

Merewether High School, BROADMEADOW NSW

Stamps

I did not even realise
my family had them:
an album,
faded but well cared for-
Nazi State printed
in typewriter letters
on the cover.

Inside, stamps line up
in military formations,
the Fuhrer's face
and swastika greet me
from every page-
Deutsches Reich
in curling letters
and a yellowing
perforated trim.

In a darkened room
under the lamp

I can touch

the paper that saw
unimaginable things.

the book
on my desk haunts
me.

and I wonder what else
about ourselves
we do not know.

Judge's Comment

A good feel for description and place

Jemima Ng

Applecross Senior High School, ARDROSS WA

Frost Free

The lacy tourist attraction
frozen to the bone
Crystals creeping from root to tip
the tree stands alone.
Rosy cheeks from ice-cold winds
rainbow coloured scarf
Posing for the camera-- say cheese!
he said with a laugh.
Encircled by the soaring pines
an icy sculptured tree
Distant pond once running
now solid white, not free.
Snapshot of these memories
I now recall the past
A piece of nature's artwork
in Seoul, timeless, it will last.

Judge's Comment

Nice words, well-structured, a good poem!

Madeleine La

James Ruse Agricultural High School, CARLINGFORD NSW

Foreign Islander

The dark is welcoming
With open hands
It does not judge
For it has no eyes.
Unlike the sun,
Who observes your every move
And does not forget
Your mistakes.
I grasp hold to life
Yet, I wait for it to be taken away.
What has become of me?

The cries of the pig
Echoes through the forest.
The pounding of their feet
Like a slurred staccato
They run,
Without looking back
Without reason
Without dignity
Their face is not human
Their heart has faded
What has become of us?

I stand in the forest
With the branches swaying
to this gentle breeze
Oh how long will this last?
To have the warmth of the sun embrace me
To have the solitary comfort that I long for
Is it too much to ask for?
Looking up at the endless
Branches that cater fruit
Now, I feel calm
I feel at home
I feel like myself as
Loneliness is my only comfort.
Yet again
I wake up,
With only darkness as a greeting
What has become of me?

I can see the intricate swirls of the smoke
And the proud, orange layers that they surround.
It dances in the air
So exuberant, too alive
Casting cruel shadows on their painted faces
Enhancing their brutal natures
It too, is betrayed
Forgotten is the fire,
Bringing with it the signal for rescue
Now, it hosts evil
What has become of us?

Only the violent ripples of the ocean
Can assuage my anger.
I can not take it any longer
For the blood stains their hand
Red as the paint they wear around their eyes
Oh, it is red
Red as the sun in mid-morning
Red as the berries that burst in my hand,
The juice dripping down my clenched fist
Oh,
It is sick,
It is disgusting
What has become of me?

Their sobs are ignored,
Their hopes are shattered
Like broken glass.
Evil has prevailed
For even the fire has turned against us
For even reality has diminished
For even 'rescue' is unfamiliar on my tongue
Fear has shaped our lives
Afraid of my own shadow
Oh,
What has become of me?
Oh,
What has become of us?

Judge's Comment

There are vivid images that put the reader in the place very effectively

Mel O'Neill*St Michael's Collegiate, HOBART TAS***Imaginarium**

This is what I do when I'm stuck in two 1
places, both of which I don't want to be.
I sit and write about stupid things like
sticky glue,
two oddly paired shoes, 5
sometimes I'll even write a stray line about you.
My bedroom's too hot but outside it's too cold.
The wind is blocked, but I want it to whisk me away.
So I sit down again and write about things like
sinking boats, 10
old fashioned telephones,
maybe strum a few chords about your incorporeal throne
I don't need you for inspiration;
I'm just fine with my imagination.
It works better than you in terms of teleportation. 15
And now I get to decide my own destination.
Something dawned on me so I said it out loud.
Unfortunately I didn't like the response.
So I grabbed a pen and wrote about
broken fans, 20
cakes in pans,
and I sung a note or two about your unfinished plans.
The heavens were strung up on a chain,
so I tied it up and hung it around my neck.
It helped me think and I wrote my thoughts about 25
chandeliers,
coloured cockatiels,
just like the ones that you used to steal.
I don't need you for inspiration;
I'm just fine with my imagination. 30
It works better than you in terms of teleportation.
But, like Charlotte from her web, I give you my salutations.
If the ink runs dry and the paper burns,
you don't have to be too concerned because
you know, I can just run down to the store 35
and do this thing called 'buy some more',
I know you like taking care of things
but listen carefully, I want this to ring
through your mind:

Honestly, I'm doing just fine	40
Once you said that with all I type	
I might just run out of letters to form,	
but I'm pretty sure my wit disagrees. I'll write	
about blue doors,	
about rolling on the floor.	45
I'll write more and more and more and more and more.	
I'll write about my cat,	
about the sky turning black.	
I'll write more and more and more.	
exploding stars	50
mini racing cars	
yellow, flowery hats	
shaggy, grey mats	
greeting cards	
hiding in the dark	55
cellophane	
a good board game	
zombies and rainbows	
umbrellas and raincoats	
red cake tins	60
an art supply bin	
soft braided hair	
feelings of the air	
ice cream vans	
a box of sand	65
Welcome to my imagination.	

Judge's Comment

I like a good list poem, and this is that. Great images and humour.

Henry Poole

Cranbrook School, BELLEVUE HILL NSW

Terra Nullius

They came down under, deep down under
terra nullius they called it
a false name though, it was...
From the motherland they came
their ships, vast and tall
beasts unwelcome on our shores
they plagued our precious coast
with foul tongue and outlandish dress
we were here
and still terra nullius they called it
They swarmed in, choking us with their fumes
polluting our land, our culture
they were pests in this country
unwelcome, unwanted, uninvited
they made it their own
terra nullius, no man's land
We became foreigners
banished from our home
Yes, we are still here
no longer is this land our own
we are the strangers
unnatural, alien, displaced
they came down under, deep down under
and terra nullius they called it
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unnatural, alien, displaced
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Judge's Comment

The repetition of the word 'and terra nullius they called it' keeps bringing the poem back to the point that it was not this - a thoughtful well-written poem.



Hayley Pymont

*Corrimal High School
CORRIMAL NSW*

She

She sits on the new blue carpet
With her back against the wall under the window,
Looking close down to her novel
With those small black words covering the page.
Lifting her head
She tells me to quiet my self talk
And in a heartbeat
I am back in the classroom.
She, the teacher continues to read on with the novel.
I ignore her
As I am trying to write.
To have freedom, time to myself.
To do something I can do.
The sound of the fan throbs in my ear.
I am silent.

Judge's Comment

Intense and intensely imagined

Abira Riaz

James Ruse Agricultural High School, CARLINGFORD NSW

Behind the Glass Curtain

Those tendrils of sinking, empty
Acts of kindness
that seep into this curtained, bleached alcove
Hospital corners,
Oh, oh that harsh white-
Antiseptic hung dry in the air

Immersed.
Here, nothing can remain.

For they look upon,
Smiles bitterly placed
On those masks of washed out...-
Hope?
Far too long have those creased eyes
Gazed inside with no sign of
That soft, soft warmth
Emptied eight years ago at the local boneyard
With its polished floors and
Powder white coats
Diagnosis confirmed.

Dropped their heavy bags
Their chains and their crosses;
Dead silver and gold to rot on the earth.
Too late to turn their backs
And watch the dull glint
Of everything they left
Fade.

And yet what-
what is that
Crack in the glass curtain-
Oh, how sweetly it resounds!

Held in that little wheeled
Cage
Of course.
Why does
She sing and hum
Whimsical trickles of hope?
Even though I
Scream inside
and nothing comes out.

And when her tiny feet kiss the ground
In vain, not to last
When that now outstretched hand
Can no longer be clutched
When those placid notes finally wither away,
A fate tattooed into her wrinkled sky,
She will still smile.

Screams long overdue
Flood my worn, worn
throat
At her pain
At my pain.

And almost,
Almost like a wet snowflake that could never be
On her sickly, shaking palm
The blaring lights dissipate
As the steady beeps merge slowly
Into a calm humming line
And I see her smiling,
Those soft, soft words.
'Don't be afraid'.

Judge's Comment

A vividly imagined scene, with excellent use of language.

James Ross

Cranbrook School, BELLEVUE HILL NSW

There Is a Boat on the Horizon

There was a boat on the horizon
Endeavour
An outsider
A people

They glow a pearly white
They're constricted by blue and red
They speak in loud licks
Shrill as the cockatoo

Smallpox and muskets
Death and destruction
Thousands of years
Altered in minutes

They pave the land drab
They fence the land jigsaw
They cross the land black
Terra Nullius

We are the nation of plenty
The land of sweeping plains
 A people of open arms
A people of deep-found fear

There is a war
There is persecution
We are the haves
They are the have-nots

Inferno in Arafura
Overboard at Christmas
The island nation
Turns a blind eye

22 million
6 thousand
It is our decision
There is a boat on the horizon

James Ross – Cranbrook School
There was a boat on the horizon
Endeavour
An outsider
A people

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Overboard at Christmas
The island nation
Turns a blind eye

22 million
6 thousand
It is our decision
There is a boat on the horizon

Judge's Comment

well-expressed and exactly written. And it asks a good question.

Lucas Sims

St Michael's Collegiate, HOBART TAS

Making Pictures

The photo album of the future, everything online
Snapshots of life, laid out for all to see.
Sorted "neatly", labels belying blurred distinction.
Two faces flashing gang signs (I doubt they're affiliated with a
gang)

Judgement passed by all and sundry.

L
O
L
:D

A snapshot of shenanigans, undergone, taken, and printed, that
very evening.

Developed as data, displayed as dots

On a screen that fits in your hand.

A camera you can play games on (it makes phone calls too)

A few buttons pressed, memory saved.

Everyone's a photographer, a doctor, an "artiste"

From a privilege, to a career, to a hobby, to barely a thought

A treasure, to a memory, to a portrait, to a joke.

Judge's Comment

An original take on the optional theme; well-expressed

Jonathan Tognela

Bunbury Catholic College, BUNBURY WA

Loved at Last

Glass displays
of butterflies pinned down for examination, note taking and
discussion
With little noise and no intention,
they flutter,
despite stiff wings and ignorant antennae
Only through this, their immobile flight, do I notice, that their
beauty
once insignificant or unnoticed
thrashes wildly in the room, sparking passion,
emotion
love for what's lost, because I didn't see my love
until it flew inert.

Judge's Comment

A thought completely expressed with exact use of words and
images.

Hoang Huy Tran

Ashfield Boys High School, ASHFIELD NSW

Poem

He's standing there
in front of
beautiful sandy beaches
surrounded
by yellow sea
 red sun
green hills
black rocks
blue sky
brown trees
orange leaves

He's standing there
tastes his salty lips
feels his shivering hands
smiling
like he's in love
with this beauty
with this country
with this life
with himself

He's standing there
feeling
his first autumn morning
in Australia
the land down under
he's me

Judge's Comment

The use of stark images and short lines gives this poem a sense of urgency and sincerity, culminating in the last line which makes it personal and memorable.

Rohan Viswalingam

Knox Grammar School, SYDNEY NSW

Kin

Would I be that dark veil to cast an endless specter over her shining heart?

Would I be the one to deny her fervent happiness, to deprive her of sweet desire?

Would I enact her fate, the same of which I have suffered for so long?

No, I would weave a coloured picture to beckon her smile

I would break that glistening lock on thy door for her passage to the picking fields.

But I would not do so without relinquishing my map and courage compass to her.

For I have climbed those trees to pick the scarlet fruits,

Have fallen so many times, have degraded my hands with evil splinters, slashes and scabs and have left that place with an empty basket and a heavy metal mind, yearning for atonement.

Would I condemn her to that arduous journey of confusion and frustration?

No.

But the stars wheel overhead and the blades of grass grow high without a care for my need to slow that grand clock, set in marble high on mountain crag.

Judge's Comment

Arresting images and the intensity of the writing make this poem a pleasure to read.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary

Blake Artlett

Carinya Christian School, TAMWORTH NSW

Rugby

The adrenaline rush as the game kicks off
You catch it but knock it on.
Ref calls scrum, the push starts
Arms ripple as you lift high above your head
You make a break, the speed kicks in,
You run down the sideline.
You're stopped with a hard tackle that sends
you tumbling over the line.
The ref calls 'game', it's all over.

Judge's Comment

Great descriptions, vivid sense of a game in progress



James Bignell

Dalyellup College , Dalyellup WA

The War of Men

We remember the old, and the young
Side by side, father and son
Gun in my hand, fear in my eye
Pride in my heart as we march, like we are on display

That is why we have Anzac day
We get up at the rise of the sun, and go to the service
As we have done, year after year, month after month

We have not forgotten them
Seeing through a mothers eye, watching her son and husband
Go again back to the hell hole

Judge's Comment

Thoughtful and well-expressed.

Jai Goggan

Sarina State High School, SARINA QLD

Growing Old

Some may consider me senile
I just look and smile
Knowing if they were all as intelligent as me
They would not treat me so glibly

I may be old by their standards
But I rather like the title of grandad
To be where I have been and know what I know
These young whippersnappers will have to grow

I can still ride a horse and crack a whip
Even though I need an afternoon kip
I still work and contribute taxes
While many of you sit on your backsides

I would not change a thing in the life I have led
Although I have had sorrow and my heart has bled
This has made me the person that I am today
And I am proud of my head full of grey

So as my life is coming towards its end
I can only hope that you will call me friend
And enjoy your life to its fullest as have I
And hopefully we will meet again one day in the sky.

Judge's Comment

Thoughtful and empathetic.

Gregory Innis

Holy Spirit College, BELLAMBI NSW

A Young Boy's War

Have you ever sat down and wondered
what it is like
to fight in a war?

Have you thought
about all the young men and boys
who are at war
giving their lives for you to live your life?

We are crying because our sons have died
or fathers have passed away,
doing their duty
on the front line of battle

So why are young men giving their lives
for war?
For us to live?
For us to survive?
Let us ask them for their reply:

When you hear their stories
Your heart goes down
and you cannot take any more,

For it sounds like a place
that is death for all,
and all around the world
will mourn.

For I hear the stories of hell
and the life that exists there in war,
that is not really a life at all.

So I sit down
and think of the life that I have,
and I despair their life, the dread, the loss,
that may never be found,
that may never be found again
the life of these young boys.

Judge's Comment

Thoughtful and well written

Gregory Innis

Holy Spirit College, BELLAMBI NSW

Days of Love

Love is a thing of hope that moves around the world.
You see the love of God around.
Very good time to share
your love and love with all your heart

Every time you look
you can see love that is so hard to take
Because there's lots of times to love
but you don't see it

Love is a thing that gives new hope
All new things go around
to let your heart go out to who's there.

The love that you can see in us all
Every day for all the world to see.
Days of love and new hope for the world

For every new step you take
You have created a new world of
Peace and love.

Judge's Comment

This is a gentle thoughtful poem

Misha Bukovsky

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

The Ocean

Wet and wild
Dangerous and spooky
Predators waiting to strike
If you wait, it's too late
There's no hope for you.

Move slowly and cautiously
you never know what's behind you
Don't be fooled, it's all a trick
Every day is a fight for survival.

The waves crash soft and quiet
As it journeys across the earth
Creatures constantly swimming
As they are frightened.

The oceans wide, black and blue.
It flows deep to the bottom
Untouched beauty at its finest.
This is the ocean.

Judge's Comment

Good images and choice of words. Well done!

Lauren Jenkins

Holy Spirit College, BELLAMBI NSW

The Butterfly

The fluttering of the butterfly's wings
The beating of the wings on the morning dew
along the grass

The grass and flowers swaying with the butterfly's wings
breezes created when the wind is blowing around
the butterfly's are fluttering around

Bees rushing through the flowers collecting pollen
interrupted by the butterfly fluttering around.
The bees collecting pollen race back to their hive like it is
a big game at the Olympics.

Fluttering around the flowers like an extraordinary butterfly
in an ordinary day - everyday.

Casually landing on a flower nearby to have a minute rest.

Judge's Comment

Good images - a lovely poem

Connor Mishalow

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

A Small World

A lonely town
In that town there is a lonely museum
In that museum is a lonely case
In that case; a lonely rifle.

The rifle is engraved on the barrel
D-day 1945 - a day when I lost a friend
It had not always had a lonely life
It was found on a beach years later.

The man or friend had fallen in the crisis of action
In that same discovery next to the rifle was the ammunition
They never got their chance to shine
Sat there in the museum until one day...

One day a very old man walked up with scars and a familiar pair of glasses
He walked right up to a museum worker
"There he is!" he yelled at the museum worker and then he left.
That night it was more quiet than usual.
The next day movers came in.

They came in with cases; lots of men, with cases of all sizes.
Men grabbed the guns, grenades and ammunition.

The man put the rifle on the fireplace and said "Hey, old friend!"
Then the rifle woke up in a beautiful place called home.
He had all these little children watching him.
He was in a whole new museum.
Finally he was home.

Judge's Comment

An interesting story, well told and original

Daniel Lotu

Redeemer Baptist School, NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

Rugby

Kick off... about to start.
Butterflies in my tummy,
ball in the air...
about to be caught.
We start running....a second later...
BOOM, big hit, crash like a car.
Few minutes later, sweating in the heat.
No scores to either side.
Everyone trying with all their heart.
HOOTER HOOTER...
IT'S HALF-TIME.

Second half under way. Ball in the air about to be caught...
We are almost there near the try line.
Last tackle left...we make a try.

Judge's Comment

Full of action and the feeling of playing rugby

Julian O'Neill

Dalyellup College , Dalyellup WA

AUTISM AT SCHOOL

WHEN I COME TO SCHOOL
I HEAR WHITE NOISE NOTHING NEW
I'M SURRANDED BY TOO MANY PEOPLE
AND YOU MAKE ME LOOK AT YOU!

YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE
THAT I HAVE A DISABILITY
BUT THAT IS NO REASON
TO EXCLUDE ME

THERE IS AN ASSISTANT
EVER WATCHING ME
MAKING ME FEEL LIKE EVERYONE
IS BETTER THEN ME

YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE
THAT I HAVE A DISABILITY
BUT THIS IS NO REASON
TO EXCLUDE ME

SOCIALLY I CAN'T DO WHAT YOU DO
BUT I CAN DO OTHER THINGS TOO
I MAY BE AUTISTIC BUT
I AM JUST AS GOOD AS YOU

YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE
THAT I HAVE A DISABILITY
BUT THIS IS NO REASON
TO EXCLUDE ME

WHEN YOU LOOK AT SOMEONE
YOU SEE JOY, RAGE AND SORROW
BUT WHEN I LOOK ALL I SEE
IS THE FACE OF SOMEONE ELSE

YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE
THAT I HAVE A DISABILITY
BUT THIS IS NO REASON
TO EXCLUDE ME

I CAN DO MATH AND SCIENCE TOO
I CAN PLAY SOME INSTRUMENTS TO TUNE
I CAN DO COMPUTERS AS WELL
BUT I GUESS THAT DON'T MATTER TO YOU

YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE
THAT I HAVE A DISABILITY
BUT THIS IS NO REASON
TO EXCLUDE ME

SOCIALLY I CAN'T DO WHAT YOU'VE DONE
BUT I HAVE DONE OTHER THINGS AND WON
I MAY BE AUTISTIC BUT
I'M JUST AS GOOD AS ANYONE

YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE
THAT I HAVE A DISABILITY
BUT THIS IS NO REASON
TO EXCLUDE ME

Judge's Comment

Thought provoking – a good poem.



Aimée Johnson

Canning College, BENTLEY WA

Homeostatic meditation

Surround yourself with eternal light,
let dreams and beliefs be your only sight.
See what you love and what you adore,
imagine ideas and so much more.
Smell what's familiar, let it in,
give into temptation it is no sin.
Taste what is sweet and never sour,
take your time, forever and an hour.
Hear the sound of enlightenment,
purity and bliss is time well spent.
Feel tranquility crawl through your skin,
once you are done then time shall begin.
Touch the skies and reach for the stars,
open your eyes and know who you are.
Only now can you create, inspire, and relish the beauty of making a
picture.

Judge's Comment

A lovely poem

Joshua Visevic

Prairiewood High School, WETHERILL NSW

My Foot Fell Asleep

My foot fell asleep
Right inside my shoe
From sitting around
Having nothing to do
It hadn't drank warm milk
Didn't try to count sheep
It just wasn't busy
And fell right asleep

You see in my shoe
It gets lonely and boring
Which makes my foot sleepy
And soon it will be snoring
My foot snored so loudly
My shoe began flapping
But I dint notice it
Kept right on napping

It slept through the morning
And most of the day
Despite that my other foot
Wanted to play, it took a
Siesta it slumbered inert
It nodded through dinner
It dozed through dessert

Now I'm in my bed
And I've been up all night
I'm trying to sleep
Although try as I might
My foot slept all day
(What a foolish mistake!)
Now I can't fall asleep
Cause my foot is now awake

Judge's Comment

I love the humour in this well done!

NOTES