

COPYRIGHT

All rights reserved by the Dorothea Mackellar Memorial Society Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the above Society.



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.

Project Officer
The Dorothea Mackellar Memorial Society Inc
PO Box 113
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380
Phone: 02 67 421200
Email: dorotheamackellar@bigpond.com
Website: www.dorothea.com.au

"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)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2013 Statistics	6
President’s Report	7
Primary Sections Judge’s Report	8
Secondary Sections Judge’s Report	9
Winner, Lower Primary	12
Runner-up, Lower Primary	14
Winner, Upper Primary	15
Runner-up, Upper Primary	17
Winner, Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary	18
Runner-up, Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary	19
Winner, Junior Secondary	20
Runner-up, Junior Secondary	21
Winner, Senior Secondary	23
Runner-up, Senior Secondary	26
Winner, Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary	27
Runner-up, Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary	29
Winner, Community Relations Commission	30
Highly Commended, Lower Primary	35
Highly Commended, Upper Primary	41
Highly Commended, Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary	49
Highly Commended, Junior Secondary	56
Highly Commended, Senior Secondary	65
Highly Commended, Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary	77
Commended, Lower Primary	87
Commended, Upper Primary	99
Commended, Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary	125
Commended, Junior Secondary	135
Commended, Senior Secondary	162
Commended, Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary	190
Notes	214

2013 Entry Figures

Total entries	9975
Number of schools	702

Categories

Senior secondary	491
Junior secondary	2365
Upper primary	4842
Lower primary	1954
Learning assistance secondary	131
Learning assistance primary	144
CRC award	48

State

ACT	208
NSW	6208
NT	82
QLD	434
SA	175
TAS	420
VIC	1674
WA	774

President's Report

This has been an exceptional year for the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards with almost 10,000 entries.

It is the 30th anniversary of the cast bronze statue of Dorothea on her horse in Anzac Park which was erected following a nationwide public subscription.

This year, with the generous assistance of the Gunnedah Shire Council, BHP Billiton and many others, we have been able to make significant landscape improvements to the area surrounding the statue. This will make it a much more appealing place to sit and ponder the legacy left by both Dorothea Mackellar and founder Mikie Maas. We are very lucky to be able to share this with visitors to Gunnedah and local residents.

I would like to congratulate and thank every single student who was inspired to enter our competition. We are much richer for your efforts and in my mind every one of you is a winner.

John Lemon.

Primary Sections

Judge's Report

I would like to relate a personal anecdote which I think reinforces the impact of Dorothea Mackellar's poetry on generations of Australians. Earlier this year my father passed away. As I was sorting through his documents I found five small exercise books filled with stories. I wept as I read them, knowing how much he had missed the bush in his final months. As I read his faded, spidery writing I came to these very familiar lines:

*'I love a sunburnt country
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.'*

Dad wrote of how often these words came to mind when he was out in the bush. He finished his story like this: *'In conclusion, these lines from that wonderful poet, Dorothea Mackellar.'*

*'All you who have not loved her
You will not understand.'*

This inspired me to get on with the task of reading the thousands of poems that young students from all over Australia have entered in this year's Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards. I'm sure Dad would have loved them.

Once again, these awards have inspired an abundance of poetry and a vast array of styles, techniques and poetic devices including simile, metaphor and alliteration. Extensive vocabulary and comprehension were evident in many of the upper primary entries. Again many students chose the optional theme, 'Wherever the Wind Blows', but equally many chose unique topics. It was noted that there were a large number of sad poems, perhaps reflective of world events, homelessness, war, refugees and bullying.

This being my second year as a judge, I am better acquainted with the awards, and so in some ways I was more prepared for the deluge of entries as they arrived. But I think it would be impossible for me to ever be prepared for the joy I feel when I read an entry which is unique and well-written. Like precious jewels, cut and polished until they gleam, they excite and inspire and remind me of why I agreed to take on this task once again. I must admit to feeling awed at the quality of some of this year's poems.

Again I must reiterate how very difficult it is to choose winners, runners up, highly commended and commended entries. Because of the high quality of these poems it can sometimes be as little as a spelling mistake or a typographical error which distinguishes one poem over another.

Again I must commend teachers, parents and the hard working committee of the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards for their efforts in nurturing and encouraging a new generation of Australian poets.

Glenda Millard

Secondary Sections

Judge's Report

What a wonderful privilege it is to read so many poems by talented teens from around Australia. The challenge, though, is always in choosing between them and determining which is better than others. Because poetry is, by its very nature, subjective. What appeals to one will not necessarily appeal to others, because poetry is successful when it speaks to the reader or listener in some way. The poems which rose to the top in this year's wards were those which offered the reader (in this case, me) the chance to look at something in a new way, or experience something new. This happens via two means: what is said about the subject, and how it is said. Together those two elements combine to create a third: an impact on the reader.

The poems which I selected for awards of commended or higher ranged in topic, in form and in length. There were lengthy poems and haiku, highly rhymed and structured forms and free verse and experimental forms. There were poems which chose to use complex language and those which used more simple word choice. Some were light hearted, funny, and others were chillingly serious. What these 'good' poems had in common, however, is that they made me think. When I read them I was left feeling something – happy, or sad, or in awe – and wanted to reread to see just how the poet had made that happen. Some of these poems were on topics which were new to me, or not regularly written about – the poem about the sloth kept pulling me back, for example. Other poems were on topics which have been written about many times before – war, death, sunsets, lost love – but when the poets found their own way to approach the topic so that their poem was different from what's gone before, they worked.

Thank you to the teachers and parents who have taken the time, in what I know is a crowded curriculum, to encourage the love of poetry, and thank you especially to the young poets who have shared their work with me, and with us all. Whether you were a winner or not, your gift is hopefully the experience of knowing that you can write poetry.

Sally Murphy

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

2013 Anthology

WINNERS AND RUNNERS-UP

Lower Primary

Winner

Josiah MAY, 9

*Knox Grammar Preparatory School
WAHROONGA NSW*

Images of Australia

The wind takes us on a rainbow of many colours-
to the rich orange of the outback
reflected in the wilderness of the sky
with fingers of gold
stretched across a canvas
of burnt red.
Giant clouds painting the sky like a bucket of spilt paint
and...
below
a single tree, a green twisted shape, taunted by its aloneness.
and the breeze moves on...

Down below
the land stays gold
for thousands of miles
before seeping into reds
greens, yellows and browns.
Becoming a quilt of many patterns...
white dimples on brown stems,
illuminated leaves trailing down,
stained hills of scrub
seamed by wooden stitches.
and yet... the breeze moves on...

Past horribly twisted ghost gums,
subjects of paranoia,
laughing and cackling
as they glow underneath
the pure white moon
and point their cold contorted fingers
upwards
surrounded by frozen plants who,
beheld their icy souls,
and, themselves, were paralysed.
with a shudder, the breeze moves away...

And breathes relief as down below
inside the water another world lives,
a mere reflection that is deceiving
and beautiful.

Willow trees' leaves hang like
dangling Christmas ornaments.
Green and black
mix and mingle together
dancing silhouettes
the sun, shines and shimmers
and then the breeze moves on...

And stops in a room of clouds,
a circus of acrobatic droplets
flinging through the air.
Trapeze artists
dressed in pink,
amidst wild elephants roaming
through the sky,
accompanied by goofy clowns
honking their golden noses.
The sun applauds them
and the breeze rests.

Judge's Comment

This poem effectively gives a bird's-eye view of the Australian landscape. A number of poetic devices have been used, including breathtaking metaphors such as these: 'stained hills of scrub seamed by wooden stitches' and 'a circus of acrobatic droplets'. The poet has ably painted rich and detailed images in the reader's mind with this mature poem.

Lower Primary

Runner-up

Elaine HANSEN, 8

*North Ainslie Primary School
AINSLIE ACT*

Take Care of the Planet

When the sun will be dreaming
And the moon will be out
The owl will be flying
Without any doubt
When the waves will be crashing
On the sand covered shore
The crabs will be sleeping
On the cold ocean floor
When the leaves will be falling
From the tall Autumn trees
I will be dreaming of all that this means.

Judge's Comment

The poet has used rhythm very well. By repeating the words '*when the*' and '*will be*' the poet reinforces the idea that life is a cycle, that all she has spoken of has happened before and will again. This gives the reader a sense of comfort. But then the final line makes us wonder if we should take nature for granted and we are reminded of the poem's title. A very thoughtful poem.

Upper Primary**Winner****Jarrold HOY, 11**

*Curl Curl North Public School
North Curl Curl NSW*

Letters and Numbers

Green and black systems,
Intricate wires weave like lines on a map.
The roads beat with ancient, solemn, knowledge,
Speaking secrets never told.

A city of silicon,
Battery towers and buildings hung with marvellous wire tapestries
Pulsing and glowing.
A universe built of perfect numbers

There is a galaxy of electricity
Nebulae and fire,
Dust and wind,
Endless possibility
A map I cannot read
Alien images, a code that cannot be broken
Circuit boards sparkling with meteors of knowledge that I can never
reach.

The mazes glow
A cherry-red inferno
Burning cold with strange hieroglyphs
Always repeating
So many secrets, so many voices
The history, the future, the passwords, secret languages of
numbers,
Probability
Possibility
Brimming with the wasted intricacy of a million fingerprints.

All buried beneath a thousand tonnes of useless information
Scattered, where everyone but no-one knows where to find
This is not something from nature,
It is a silent-thrumming lost-known place
With perfect patterns of frost and spheres of gravity
Scientific algorithms

Circles of a million rivers, electrical veins, cycling

A system

A galaxy

A universe

Within a hard drive

Judge's Comment

An astonishing poem which creates powerful images in the reader's mind.

With obvious knowledge of his subject and an excellent command of English, the poet has transformed what to many of us is an alien and somewhat uninteresting topic, into a breath-catching expose of the hidden beauties of science and technology.

Jarrold has resisted the temptation to overwrite. His words are spare, yet so well chosen that they illuminate the topic and exhilarate the reader.

When I read this poem it reminded me of the mesmerizing voice of noted astrophysicist, the late Carl Sagan, speaking passionately about the cosmos. Both inspired a sense of awe in me. Congratulations on an outstanding poem, Jarrod.

Upper Primary

Runner-up

Prajusha MUKHOPADHAYA, 9

Cherrybrook Public School
CHERRYBROOK NSW

Foggy Winter Days

As Winter breeze comes
All windowsills fog and gloom
I look with my heart.

Judge's Comment

A very mature haiku. Deceptively simple. Beautiful. Well done.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary

Winner

Alpay FILIZKOK, 12

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

BEES

A tornado of bees
Swarming together as one
Their tiny, transparent wings
Creating a windstorm.
Buzzing, flying, zapping through the air,
Their tiger like skin
Spell danger.

Judge's Comment

The poet has used wonderfully graphic language. Is tornado the collective noun for bees? If not, it should be. Wonderful!

Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary

Runner-up

Snigdha SINGH, 9

*Sutherland Public School
SUTHERLAND NSW*

Rainy Day

On a rainy day,
I wish to see the sun shine,
And you, my love.

Judge's Comment

A tender and wistful poem - a love song. Beautiful.

Junior Secondary

Winner

Elisabeth SULICH, 12

*SCEGGS Darlinghurst
DARLINGHURST NSW*

Where Poppies Grow

The young larks fly over rusted wire
Over the fields where guns did fire
Over the fields where diggers fell
Over the fields, the gates of hell

The young larks fly over poppies red
Over the fields where the young men bled
Fly over the hills where shots rang out
Over the hills where poppies sprout

The young larks fly over crosses white
Where sleet lashed down in the cold, dark night
Over the land where blood did stain
Over land where men groaned in pain

The larks fly over fields muddy and grey
Over the fields where the soldiers lay
Over the hills of the men so brave
For oh so many the unknown grave

The larks still fly there still today,
But the land is no more cold and grey
White crosses stand there row by row
And in Flanders Fields the poppies grow...

Judge's Comment

Seemingly inspired by John McRae's famous war poem 'In Flanders Fields', this poem reflects on the impact and after effects of war, with the larks flying over both wartime scenes 'muddy and grey' and post war scenes of 'poppies red' and 'crosses white', highlighting the contrasts.

The use of rhythm and rhyme is consistent throughout, making the poem a gentle mournful song, and the contrasts between beauty and horror are cleverly placed so that the reader is left thinking about both the horror of war and the sense of peace and even hope in the scene today. A beautiful poem.

Junior Secondary

Runner-up

Simone ENGELE, 13

*Oxley Christian College
CHIRNSIDE PARK VIC*

The Oak

Will you come with me?
Down to the young oak tree.
We can play games,
And dance around,
And make a rope swing,
And chase our shadows.

Come with me,
Down to the growing, swaying oak tree.
We can talk about school,
And do our homework,
And gossip about our teachers,
And tell of our dreams.

Will you come with me?
Down to the swaying, large oak tree.
We can speak of our broken dreams,
And our various crushes,
And our views on heaven and hell,
And of our school reports.

Come with me,
Down to the large, soaring oak tree.
We can rage about our parents,
And secretly hold hands,
And carve our initials into the oak tree,
And shyly embrace.

Will you come with me?
Down to the soaring, aging oak tree.
We can talk of our plans,
And watch the clouds drifting by,
And you can stroke my shining hair,
And we can talk of our love.

Come with me,
Down to the aging, furrowed oak tree.
We can plan our wedding,

And our family,
And we can kiss slowly,
And gaze out at the sky.

Will you come with me?
Down to the furrowed, leafy oak tree.
We can talk about our daughter,
And you can place your hand on my swollen belly,
And you can caress my silky hair,
And we can talk of our finances.

Come with me,
Down to the leafy, giant oak tree.
We can talk about our son's children,
And we can talk about death in the family,
And you can rub my dyed hair,
And you can whisper secrets in my ear.

Will you come with me?
Down to the giant, old oak tree.
We can talk about our retirement home,
And we can make a draft of our will,
And you can run your fingers through my grey hair,
And we can talk about heaven and hell.

Come with me,
Down forever to the ancient oak tree.
We can sleep forever under the soil,
And the gnarled roots will embrace us,
And the oak shall be our gravestone,
The oak of our childhood and of our love.

Judge's Comment

This is a cleverly wrought poem, exploring the life span of a pair of young friends who grow into and through adulthood together, mirrored by the life of the oak tree which is a constant in their lives.

Each stanza offers a slice of a life stage – from childhood, to teenage years, into first love, right through to resting peacefully in death. With just a few lines, the poet captures the essence of each of those stages. As the pair grows so too does the tree, from a young sapling through to a gnarled ancient refuge. The repeated line of 'come with me' reminds the reader of the connection between the narrator and her partner, but also invites the reader to come along for the journey. A finely crafted poem.

Senior Secondary

Winner

Jobelle ROSCAS, 16

*Rosny College
ROSNY TAS*

Hiroshima

At 8.15 in the morning
on August 6th, 1945
the clocks froze
in Hiroshima.

I can't remember
at what temperature
the air boiled that morning
when the day had barely begun,
but I know it was hot enough
for the fathers stepping out of their homes
the mothers kissing their husbands goodbye
the children on the street
to instantly
turn to ash.

When Death shuffled along the road that day
collecting souls in his arms,
He walked quietly and carefully
not knowing who it was He was stepping on.
Even *He* shed a tear.

How deceiving the dust of humans looked
dancing through the air
falling on half-melted roofs
like snow.

On a wall somewhere,
the outline of a person
still remains.
the only reminder
they left behind.

No, Hiroshima.
God was not punishing you
for whatever sin you may have committed
once long ago.
No amount of sin could equal this tragedy.
This was made by people
just like you.

I bet those men
in their tin cans, slicing through the air,
cradling that bomb in the belly of their plane
that morning, had no idea
how devastating this could be.

Yet three days later
they dared to drop one more
on Nagasaki.

And if they knew,
I know they're kicking themselves now.
Sometimes I can hear those men crying
on the laps of their mothers
asking, *what did we do?*
what have we done?

Hiroshima,
I imagine your streets in the days that followed.
How the ashes waltzed in the breeze
and formed hands outstretched like wings,
how shadows on walls
rose to their feet and walked instinctively
home, closing a door that was once there
on the day
they wish never happened.

There is a word in Japanese
that literally means
'explosion-affected people.'
Years later,
we are writing your stories.
We are thinking of you.
We are all
hibakusha.

Judge's Comment

This is a poem which is spine tingling. To be able to deal with such a disturbing topic in a way which embraces the reader shows great maturity. Images of fathers, mothers, children turning instantly to ash are wonderfully powerful, made more so by little details such as a kiss on the cheek which make these real people rather than simply numbers. And the powerful images keep coming – Death shedding a tear, outlines on walls, men crying 'what have we done?'

The technique of using first person voice also helps to make the poem very intimate, as if the poet was a witness to the scene. Certainly, she is showing that this is a topic she cares deeply about. In such a poem it would be easy to use words of blame and condemnation. Instead of telling us how to feel, the poet allows the reader to feel the tragedy through being there – making every reader 'hibakusha'. A well deserving winner.

Senior Secondary

Runner-up

Rani JAYASEKERA, 15

Girton Grammar School

BENDIGO VIC

Sticks and Stones may Break my Bones but Words can Break my Heart

The poisoned words hurl through the air,
The muffled sobs and muted tears,
The fragile webs we weave will tear,
And desperate prayers fall on deaf ears.

And though cruel words cannot break bones,
You'll find that from them hurt will stem,
For hearts don't break from sticks and stones,
But careless words will shatter them.

And sometimes love is not enough,
To mend the holes neglect has torn,
And no amount of lies or bluff,
Can heal a heart made thus forlorn.

Though maybe time will help repair,
And soothe the aches and holes and rips,
It's best to handle words with care,
For fractured hearts are hard to fix.

Judge's Comment

The topic of bullying was a common one among entrants, showing it a subject close to many hearts. This poem, however, stood out in its handling of the subject, exploring the impact of cruel words.

The imagery of poisoned words hurling through the air, like arrows, torn webs with unmendable tears and rips, and fractured, shattered hearts are all powerful, leaving the reader in no doubt as to the impact of nasty words and taunts. The choice of an even rhyme and rhythm pattern here is a good one, and is executed well, making the message easily digestible.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary

Winner

Benjamin GIBSON, 17

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

SALUTE TO THE FALLEN

The bravest field that's ever been
Will wear a cloak of scarlet
For all the blood that on her flowed,
For all the death she met.

So listen well, who've yet to hear
The story of this flower,
Whose fame was born in war and strife
In this world's darkest hour.

*Petals caught the blood of heroes
The soldiers' stories go
Though now stained red as ruby,
Were once as white as snow.*

Just as life seeped from dead men's bones
Then into soil dark
The land still cries in pain from wounds
A battle's dreadful mark.

When on this poppy's bloody colour
Next time you turn your gaze,
Remember all those Aussie men
Who died in smoke and haze;

For on that field there died the men
With courage like no other.
They were prepared to give it all
They fought to save their brother.

We owe them then, our praise and honour
To hold in high repute.
For all of time to be remembered —
To you, Australians salute.

Judge's Comment

A cleverly written reflection on the tragedy of war and the importance of remembering the sacrifices made. The imagery of the poppies staining the field red in an echo of the bloody battles fought there is powerful as is the personification of the field itself as brave woman who bore so much and yet stands strong with her cloak of scarlet.

The poet has used rhyme and rhythm consistently throughout to create a poem which informs and inspires. Well done.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary

Runner-up

Theophilus DIN, 14

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

THE DANDELION

Freedom and Eternity ...
The dandelion I see will always be a part of me,
For I am the plant that grows in fields of liberty.
And for that reason,
I will be the plant that will give away its eternity.
For I will die soon ...
But for a human's simple wish,
Or whether it be the cause of a gush of wind,
I know for a fact that this will all be worth it.

My seeds will forever live on
From generation to generation.
For the whole world to see,
Freedom and Eternity.

Judge's Comment

A clever poem about the dandelion, which relies on a human making a wish, or a gust of wind, to spread its seed. The poet uses the dandelion as a symbol of hope and of freedom, growing in 'fields of liberty' and spreading its message through giving away its eternity, its offspring growing where the wind takes them, a clever reminder of the competition theme. Well done.

Community Relations Commission Award

Winner

Mele FIFITA, 12

*GRIFFITH PUBLIC SCHOOL
GRIFFITH NSW*

Australia Fair

How different are we in every way?
The way we eat and the things we do and say
The countries we come from and the monies we bring
Our new life in Australia was the most desired thing

What mattered the most was our heart and soul
That helped us along in our brand new role
We all came with different faiths and for different reasons
And we were ready to start like a brand new season

We came with such diverse personalities
And slowly we began to see new realities
And soon our beauty and strength began to show
And care and courage began to glow

Our new friends and neighbours started to listen
And our hearts opened up and we began to glisten
Acceptance was the key to our success
And soon we began to speak about our prowess

Now we are here forever to stay
Each day we thank God as we pray
This new land gave us hope and grace
So different from our original place

This country gave us a place to share
With all its beauty rich and rare
We therefore join in to enjoy
And to advance in Australia's beautiful fair

Judge's Comment

Whilst this young poet might not have used literary devices such as rhyme and rhythm quite as well as some others in this competition, I was very moved by the intensely personal nature of the poem. It's beauty is in its honesty and simplicity.

It is a courageous and balanced poem which does not seek to downplay the daily struggle and difficulties of re-settlement in a foreign and sometimes confusing and alienating country. However it also joyfully and liberally acclaims tolerance, acceptance and change.

I feel that this poem truly exemplifies all the fundamentals which the CRC award seeks to embody. It is a paean of hope.

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

2013 Anthology

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Lower Primary

Upper Primary

Learning Assistance Primary

Junior Secondary

Senior Secondary

Learning Assistance Secondary

Lower Primary

Jesse BAREL, 6

*Emanuel School
RANDWICK NSW*

I Love You

I love you very much.
And I guess you would love me.
I could even be kind enough to take you out for tea.
Maybe you're my favourite girl or maybe you are not.
Yes I really really love you, I love you a lot.

You are truly stuck to me like a magnet I know.
You are very very nice and your heart is soft as snow.
The feel of your skin is lovely and bright.
And when I'm walking next to you I'm holding on tight.

I believe in love and it all goes to you.
When we don't play together I feel a bit blue.
When we go the park together and play.
The thing I love is to play all day.

Just one more thing I want to say.
Please come with me and play play play
But after that please don't go home.
I feel very lonely I don't want to be alone.

Judge's Comment

I have no way of knowing if Jesse really does have a sweetheart but this poem makes me believe that it is true. And that is an excellent outcome. This young poet has a highly developed sense of rhythm and uses rhyme very well.

Alexander CHAN, 6

*Winthrop Primary School
WINTHROP WA*

Cloud Train

Watch the cloud train
rush past in the sky.
The rain clouds are
train tracks.
The raindrops are like
passengers on the Cloud Express.
The blue sky is the station.
The sun is the station master.

Judge's Comment

Good use of metaphor and simile and wonderful imagery.

Hayley BOORMAN, 6

*Narellan Vale Public School
NARELLAN VALE NSW*

The Beach

The sky is blue, it's a beautiful day,
The wind blows hard as the kites fly away.
Diamond blue ocean with wiggly waves,
Splashing on the rocks and into the caves.
The wind blows the sand everywhere,
It prickles my skin and gets in my hair.
Kite surfers are swept up into the sky,
With gusting winds, they fly so high.
The wind is howling like a wolf at the moon,
It's getting cold now, we'll have to go soon.
My hair is a mess, I need a comb,
It's way too windy. Let's go home.

Judge's Comment

The poet has used rhyme and rhythm very well. My favourite line in the poem is: '*The wind is howling like a wolf at the moon*'. This is an excellent use of simile.

Miriam COWAN, 8

Curtin Primary School
 CURTIN ACT

Wind Everywhere

Whooshing, howling,
 A ghost in the trees.
 Falling, swirling,
 Golden russet leaves.
 Strips the forest where twig fingers reach,
 To the sky, grey-blue
 Wind changing.

Clouds with silver lining move,
 To the air's persistent shove.
 Scattered like china all over the sky,
 Hear the birds screech as they wheel and dive,
 Tumbling through the wintery heavens
 Breezes pushing them up and down.
 Wind changing.

Waves tear the calm sea,
 Towering beasts of water.
 Responding to storms torn up by wind
 And the moon, so far but strong.
 A wailing, striving thing of the air.
 Ripping up tempests on the sea.
 Wind changing.

I shiver to the tremors
 Of zephyrs on the air.
 Like an Autumn leaf on the breeze,
 Flutters chilling through my bones.
 A freezing wind on clouds and currents fly,
 As free as a bird in the sky.

Judge's Comment

The poet has made excellent use of metaphor and has used interesting verbs, such as '*shove*', to describe how the air moved the clouds. I was also impressed with the simile telling us how the clouds were '*scattered like china all over the sky.*' Well done.

Oliver SVED, 8

*Knox Grammar Preparatory School
WAHROONGA NSW*

Changing Leaves

As a youngster I was emerald green,
Dancing in the breeze.
As the seasons changed,
Life changed too.

My green coat faded,
And turned an auburn brown.
Withered and wrinkled,
Like an old man.

No longer holding on,
Gliding through the sky.
Wherever the wind blows,
I'll go.

An exquisite view,
Reluctantly falling.
Tumble turns and cartwheels,
Approaching the ground below.

In danger now,
Unlikely predators.
Cars, children, dogs,
Crunch!

Spring welcomes new life,
Youngsters emerald green
A new generation
Is created

Judge's Comment

By using anthropomorphism (attributing human qualities) to a leaf, the poet has created an interesting poem on a commonly used theme.

2E CLASS POEM

Gunnedah South Public School
GUNNEDAH NSW

Travelling with the Wind

Theme: Wherever the Wind Blows, to the tune "Land Down Under"

Verse 1

Flying in a plane, economy
On a family holiday to Fiji.
Singing out loud to my favourite CD.
Everybody is looking at me.... And I said,

Chorus

I'm just a kid from the country.
Bushwalking and climbing a tree.
Did you see, did you see that brumby?
You'd better run or else he'll eat your lollies.

Verse 2

Going to Dubbo to visit the zoo.
Four hours on a bus and I need to use the loo.
Saw a giant tortoise, in fact I saw two.
Lost all my lunch to a crazy emu ... And I said,

Chorus

I'm just a kid from the country.
Blowing up anthills with a little TNT.
Dig a hole, ride my bike, feeling free.
Better hide my iPod, Mum will take it from me.

Verse 3

We have rivers and dams but I love the coast.
There's beautiful shells, I collect the most.
Watching V8s and the race was so close.
Sitting by a bonfire with marshmallows- I roast.

Repeat Verse 1

Verse 2

Judge's Comment

A poem created by a team risks the result being fragmented by a diversity of styles and ideas. However, using a theme and a repetitive chorus and adopting the rhythm of a known piece of work as a structure, has resulted in a cohesive, humorous and very Australian poem.

The tune itself is not a simple one, so I am impressed by the attention to rhythm.

I found it almost impossible not to tap my foot, hum the tune and smile while reading this entry. Congratulations on a wonderful team-effort and a terrific poem.

Audrey HEATHER, 6

*Berry Public School
BERRY NSW*

Me

Audrey
On a green slide
In the leafy park
On Saturday
Making stick and leaf cubbies.

Judge's Comment

I can see Audrey in my mind when I read this wonderful, simple, delightful poem. It tells me everything I need to know. Well done.

Upper Primary

Arabella ALLEN, 11

*Christ Church Grammar School
SOUTH YARRA VIC*

The Sweet Wind

The wind cradles the leaves,
carrying them along the sky,
each crimson crumpled texture
of an ersatz butterfly.

The stream beneath the trees
gargles in delight,
tipping over rocks and stones,
leaping into flight.

The protecting mountain walls
of jagged canine teeth
guard the treasured life below,
guard the life beneath.

Vibrant robins soar,
their chests ablaze with flame
as a breeze of sweet aromas
sails fast without an aim.

Judge's Comment

The poet has excellent sense of rhythm and has carefully avoided the overuse of adjectives, instead painting vivid word pictures with carefully chosen verbs.

Nicola BARAN, 12

Moriah College
BONDI JUNCTION NSW

Young Soldier

Stay calm soldier,
Do not panic
Stay calm soldier,
And think of what you were taught
You're too young to die,
My soldier
You're too young to leave.

Run soldier,
From the danger ahead
Run soldier,
Don't be brave
You're too young to die,
My soldier
You're too young to leave.

Fight soldier,
The enemy that fights you
Fight soldier,
And make it through the day
You're too young to die,
My soldier
You're too young to leave

Come home soldier,
I miss you terribly
Come home,
soldier to me and your family
You're too young to die,
My soldier

Judge's Comment

A moving poem, capturing the heartache and worry of knowing a family member is fighting in the armed forces. The use of the word 'my' in every stanza personalises the poem and the last stanza strongly reinforces this connection to the young soldier. It is almost like a love letter.

Mia CARMERON, 10

*Abbotsleigh Junior School
WAHROONGA NSW*

Procrastination

What hawk stops to wait
When a mouse doth catch its eye
Which frog stalls and falters
When a juicy bug flies by

What seed dawdles in its pod
Postponing propagation
Tilt winter brings her chill and frost
Expiring germination

What impala hesitates
When hunted by a pride of lions
Which honey bee sleeps in late
When spring cloaks the fields in flowers

If all creatures small and great
Do what must be done
Why do I procrastinate
And irritate my mum

Judge's Comment

This poet has used her excellent vocabulary and word comprehension to create a rhythmic, interesting, unpredictable and mature poem.

Ella-Rose CARTHEW-WOOD, 12

Coffee Camp Public School
COFFEE CAMP NSW

Night

Stars form his armour
The moon his fiery lantern
His stead the black sea.

Judge's Comment

An atmospheric and beautiful metaphor and an *almost* perfect example of haiku.

Don't forget that a computer spell-check won't pick up correctly spelt words used in the wrong place. (eg. stead/steed). A tiny error, but it can mean the difference between being shortlisted or being highly commended.

Geordana WALSH, 11

Temora Public School
TEMORA NSW

Bullies

They are the devils
who stole my smile
reasons why I cry

Judge's Comment

The poet has used mature restraint to create this exceptionally powerful and moving poem. Not a word too many.

Linn HENDRIKS MOVIG, 11

*Ravenswood School For Girls
GORDON NSW*

The Light of the Night

The guardian of the dark,
Monitoring every minute of sleep,
From the place in the sky,
The flaming sphere of fire once laid.

The only brightness at eve,
The loyal, reassuring light of the night,
Children shall stare at the work of art,
In wonder, in hope, in curiosity.

The tiny glowing grains of sand will surround it,
To worship the brilliant light,
The eye-catching sphere on the dark artist's canvas,
The stars.

The fierce warrior,
For the times when skies are black,
The journal for each adult and child,
Every word imprinted on it.

The light that lingers in the darkest times,
Guiding us through the night,
And blesses us with good dreams,
The inspiration that keeps us going.

The silver coin sent to be a leader of the universe,
A symbol of wisdom,
A heart of understanding,
The moon.

Judge's Comment

A wonderful study of the moon and its attributes, making excellent use of metaphor - my particular favourite - *'the eye-catching sphere on the dark artist's canvas'*. From hereon when I see the moon I will think of this phrase. Beautiful.

Leopold SOLDI, 10

*Sydney Distance Education Primary School
SURREY HILLS NSW*

The Winds of Change

The autumn wind is a bored teenager
Kicking the orange and red coloured leaves
Along the cracked grey footpath

The winter wind is a cranky old man
Blasting ice cold air from his walking stick
Freezing the blood in my veins

The spring wind is a playful child
Tickling my nose
With the fragrant scent of fresh flowers

The summer wind is a fun and loving mother
Gently caressing my skin with delicious warmth
As she dances over me

Judge's Comment

A unique and astute poem. A playful exercise, cleverly using metaphor to characterise the wind in all its moods. Well done.

Lewis ORR, 11

Individual Entry
DALKEITH WA

The Hermes of Seasons

Windswept by the arid gales of a throaty summer,
Land charred by desert sun, the scorched horizon a raging wildfire,
The acreage seeks desperate refuge in the shadow of Helios's
chariot.

But the Hermes of Seasons still calls and hollers,
A commissionaire of the coming autumn and an executioner of a
bitter summer,
An onslaught of papery blaze flutters freely through the clear blue
heavens.

Albeit the Courier of Equinoxes persists,
Demanding for the winnowing of shafts of light to reveal wintry
flakes,
He guilefully tantalizes a curious Persephone, evoking a cascade of
tears and anguish from a grieving Demeter.
Yet still the Harbinger of Change toils,
Urging for a chequered tartan of chromatic colours that ripples with
Aeolus's every shudder,
Tapestried with flora and fauna Gaia lo beholds.

But still the Herald of Modulation labours,
Insisting for the reign of luscious bloom and midday sun,
administering ephemeral buoyancy as an antidote for Gaia's
plagues,
He dutifully guides Persephone to the anxious embrace of her
mother.
For whether he buffets arid gales, wintry frost, autumnal blaze or
luscious bloom,
The Hermes of Seasons will always persevere.

Judge's Comment

The poet obviously has significant knowledge of Greek mythology and to appreciate the poem, so must the reader. A mature and thoughtful poem with some lovely imagery.

Remy WILLIAMS, 11

Oxford Falls Grammar School
OXFORD FALLS NSW

My Australia

Blue
painted in cerulean
with wisps of cotton flying, the sky

Dancing and twirling,
aquamarine water allows the pure light to comb through,
again and again, the sea

Green
emerald toned
spindly fingers grasping warm shadows, the grass

from olive to lime they cling to the ground,
hands outstretched, the trees

Red
scarlet poppies
sprinkled with black mourn the fallen,
worship the sun, the flowers

dyed with heat,
a ruby watching the world go by, the sacred stone

Yellow
golden brown,
crumbled, tossed, frolicked with,
the sand
a blonde sphere, provides warmth and happiness, its always
shining,
the sun

White
it is in everything. It is pure. It is our Australia, my Australia

Judge's Comment

Avoiding the clutter of unnecessary words, the poet has still managed to paint a landscape of vivid images, leading the reader seamlessly from one stanza to another.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary

Didem ARAS, 11

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

THAT BREEZE

Are you running that cross country?

With all your heart and soul?

Pushing

jogging

walking

puffing

exhausted

And then you felt this breeze on your face.

You heard someone say in your ear,

“Believe in yourself, don’t give up.”

And you did just that

And carried on.

Are you jogging on that beach and your brother has set the pace?

Walking

pounding

pressing

huffing

exhausted

And then you felt this breeze on your face.

You heard someone say in your ear,

“Believe in yourself, don’t give up.”

And you did just that

And carried on.

Judge's Comment

What I enjoyed most of all about this poem was that it left me with a sense of hope. The way the poet has used a series of verbs to reinforce the feeling of struggle is also impressive.



SHOPPING LIST ...

A cloth, a spray,
A foil tray.

A can of corn,
A packet of prawns.

A pair of chairs,
A dozen pears.

A purple plum.

What's the sum?

Judge's Comment

This beautifully rhymed and rhythmic poem is a joy to read. Simple but clever.

Anthony BOLTON, 12

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

POEM OF COURAGE — RICHARD KEITH PHILLIPS

My great grandad,
Went with the Light Horse
To Gallipoli and Fromelles.

He hid his tragic memories
For years from his family,
Then Dad and I discovered his bravery,
At the War Memorial.

Shot in the neck,
Kicked by a horse,
Medals awarded.
How I wish
I had met him.

Judge's Comment

This poem has been written on an often-used theme. But whilst many fall into the trap of overwriting and cluttering the poem with too many details, this poet does no more than state the facts and we are all the more moved by this simplicity.

Ali JIWANI, 12

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

A RACE FOR TIME

I have no ears and eyes
But I scare you with my message
When my message comes
You panic and run
Trying to get out of the house
But you can't find your keys
When my small hand moves
It looks like you will faint
But still I tried
But you never weakened
Then you looked at your watch
He was a kind folk
Then you looked at me
and laughed saying
"I have more time"
I was filled with rage
But I was stuck
Had to accept defeat
You had won.

Judge's Comment

A clever poem about a timepiece. I am very impressed by the way the poet has structured it to keep the reader guessing. Well done.

Jason LEE, 11

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

TORNADO

A disguised murderer with devastating power.
His powerful strength and unbelievable speed,
Makes it impossible to avoid him.
Once you're within his grasp,
There's no escape.
Consuming. Growing.
Swelling. Rising.
Tornado.
Gotcha.

Judge's Comment

Sometimes shape poems lose their impact when read purely for their literary merit. But although the shape and the topic of this one fit so well together, the poet has written a wonderful poem which does not rely on its shape to make it so. The first and last lines, particularly, are faultless.

Varsha YAJMAN, 11

*Parramatta North Public School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

The World

The world is in my hands,
So I have to make my plans
About how I am going to make
My world today.

Judge's Comment

This reader feels as though the poet is all-powerful, a wonderful outcome for a poem with so few words.

Mali SANDERS, 11

*Queenwood Junior School
MOSMAN NSW*

Phil is Ill

A Dr Suess type poem

Wind

Blows

Nose

Flows

Wind blows.

Nose flows.

Nose it flows,
When wind it blows.

Wind on nose,
It blows and flows.

Try to, try to keep it clean,
Noses, noses just flow green.
Nose flows green,
it makes a stream.

This is Bill.
He has a pill.

Bill with pill come.
Bill with pox come.
Bill with pill and pox and sox come.

'Who's ill?' asks Bill.
It's Phil who's Ill.
'Not Brill!'
Says Bill.

Let's fix Phil with pill and pox,
Let's make brill with nice warm sox.
Bill knows Phil's nose,
Phil's nose goes hose.

'This pill makes your nose come clean,
This pill makes your nose lose green'.

'Socks warm feet too,

Feet then warm you.

Your feet get heat
When socks you meet'.

BUT!

Bill had pox
As well as sox.

Green his nose was from the pox,
Stream his hose did even with sox.
Bill was ill,

Greener than Phil.
Bill was ill too,
Bill needs pill too.
Bill swilled pill
To stop his ill.

Who comes?
Nurse comes...
With a hanky.

Nursie dear,
She's just so lanky.

Lanky comes to blow Bill's nose.
Bill's nose it just goes and goes.

Nursie comes with a tissue,
Just in time to catch the issue.

Damn that wind that blows and blows.
Dam that nose that goes and goes.

The moral to the story is...
When you have a nose like his,

Cure your ill
With tissue and pill,
Not socks
Or pox
Or guys called Bill.

Judge's Comment

I couldn't help laughing at this Suessian poem. Despite its particularly distasteful topic, the poem is clever and well structured.

Junior Secondary

Niamh BELLICANTA, 13

*Hunter School Of The Performing Arts
BROADMEADOW NSW*

Snapshots

The rejuvenating waves
rolled in from the sea as
the sun blazed up above and
the sand burned down below.
Then the trees shed their leaves,
their colours drifting downwards.
The scarves quickly sold out
in the usually silent shops and
the sleet pelted relentlessly
every single frozen day
Everybody bought coffee
to warm them up inside
and the streets were quiet,
peaceful. And then the colours
returned with vibrant warmth as
the flowers pushed up through
the soil, and the days got longer
as the nights got wilder with life.

Judge's Comment

This little poem offers, as the title suggests, a series of snapshots as it rolls through the seasons from summer to autumn to winter and spring and back towards summer again. No season is named, but the few lines devoted to each paints it clearly, with cleverly chosen images representative of the time of year. A clever poem.

Heidi BIGGS, 15

*St Joseph's College
BANORA POINT NSW*

Cancer

Squeaking of shoes on sterile white linoleum.
Dull, monotone beeping lulling patients to sleep.
Wards filling,
The slowly emptying.
Then filling,
Endlessly.
Howls of sorrow echo throughout the silent halls.
Families come and go,
Smiling,
Crying.
Striding,
Collapsing.
IV tubes penetrate,
IV tubes extracted.
Bald scalps wrapped in satin,
Bald scalps laid in satin.
Beds rushed to ER,
Wooden enclosures carried by black suits.
Patients live,
Patients die.
Everyday,
 Every night.

Judge's Comment

Capturing the experiences of a cancer ward using senses and well chosen images including the squeak of shoes on the linoleum. The focus on the contrasts of the ward – a scarf being used to wrap or to cradle, the filling and emptying of beds, the tears and the smiles – is simple yet powerful.
A haunting poem.

Pranchad CHAURASIA, 13

*Griffith High School
GRIFFITH NSW*

Techniques

Today I wrote this poem,
but I'm not sure if it's good.
It doesn't have the things
my teacher says it should.

It doesn't share the feelings
I have deep inside of me.
It hasn't got any metaphors
and not one simile.

It's missing nearly everything.
Alliteration too.
It isn't an acrostic,
shape, or a haiku.

There's nothing that's personified.
It doesn't even have a plot.
I'm pretty sure that rhyming
is the only thing it's got.

It sure was fun to write it,
and I think it's long enough.
It's just too bad it's missing
all that great poetic fluff.

I put it on my teacher's desk
and, wow, she made a fuss.
She handed back my poem
with an A+ + +!

Judge's Comment

A funny, clever poem about the art of writing a poem. Making strong use of rhythm and rhyme, as well as humour, the poet has crafted a poem which is pleasant to read and leaves the reader smiling. Well done.

Phoebe GAUL, 14

Dalby Christian College
DALBY QLD

The Watertank

I am the watertank,
hollow and dry from lack of rain;
emitting smells, foul and rank,
evidence of past suffering and pain.
Cracks and holes now are showing,
rusty brown patches label me "cursed";
strength all gone – my supports are bowing,
symbolic of our outback's thirst.

I am also the flooded plain,
creeks and rivers overflowing;
released at last from the strain,
as their volume keeps on growing.
I am the corrugated land
gouged by a watery knife;
'til water trapped inside the sand
springs forth in exuberant life.

Judge's Comment

A poem of contrasts – the drought and flooding rain which seem to epitomise Australia. In the first stanza the poet explores drought through the image of an empty water tank, rusting and smelling 'symbolic of our outback's thirst'. In the second stanza, she presents a flooding plain, 'gouged by a watery knife' which finally leads to new 'exuberant' life. A lovely poem.

Francesca KENNEALLY, 14

*Northcote High School
NORTHCOTE VIC*

The Library

The consonants and vowels,
creating the words.

The words,
strung together into sentences.

The sentences,
dancing on the page to create poignant thoughts.

A hundred per page.
A thousand per book.
Millions all together on a shelf.

The possibilities scream out though the comparative calm.

And they wonder why I like it here.

Judge's Comment

This insightful offering made me smile, set as it is in one of a wordsmith's favourite places – the library. Letters become words, words form sentences, until we have books, hundreds of them. And in such a quiet setting, so many possibilities screaming to be heard.

So very clever, but nothing more clever than the final line which says so very much about the poet's love for the place. A gem.

Josephine LAM, 12

*MLC School
BURWOOD NSW*

Net of Sound

Sitting on the rock
Combing her long, golden hair
The crown of thorns on her head
Gazing out at the ocean with her moon pool eyes
Awaiting her next sail.

Through the horizon the vessel comes
And that is when the voice is heard.
The mermaid sings her sweetest song
As the ship comes towards it's net

She flickers her fire tail
Across the sea line shore
Towards the little wooden grave
From where they watch and see
Oh the jolly sailor boys
They cannot resist
The vines reach out and pull them in
And there they sink within.

Judge's Comment

A magical tale of the mermaid/siren singing her song to an unsuspecting shipload of sailors. The image of a net created by her song pulling the ship in is a powerful one as are those of her 'fire tail' and the ship as a 'little wooden grave'.

The ending of the poem with mention of the unsuspecting sailors as jolly contrasted with the final two chilling lines is clever.

Sarah ROSOLEN, 13

*Castle Hill High School
CASTLE HILL NSW*

The Spider

A spider is a vine
Dangerous and deadly
Attacking the near
Choking the far

A spider is a vine
Taking over the land
Corner by corner
Tree by tree

A spider is a vine
Creeping and crawling
Across the floor
Wherever you go

A spider is a vine
Spindly and sneaky
Long and lanky
About without a trace

A spider is a vine

Judge's Comment

Whilst arachnophobics may tremble, the image of the spider as a vine, spreading across floors through trees and from corner to corner, is well wrought. The use of the repeated line mirrors the message – that spiders (and their webs) spread their reach. Both creepy and amusing, this is a successful poem.

Matti SCHWARZ, 13

*Tarremah Steiner School
KINGSTON TAS*

The Authority

In the night,
The shutters lifted,
Curtains open,
God's will shifted,
Into the night,
Where angels fall,
Where all is one,
AND HE IS ALL

Out of the night,
Come shades of fear,
Priests of light,
We hold him near,
Their fires burn,
Their will is tall,
We serve our lord,
OUR LORD RULES ALL

But now at last,
The town is still,
No claws upon
The windowsill,
Into the dark,
We are called,
To serve the light,
Our people fall.

Into the dark,
Our angels fall,
We were all one,
NOW HE IS ALL

Judge's Comment

This is a chilling poem, crafting an image of an unknown predatory presence arriving under the cover of darkness and shifting the town to 'his' will. Whilst the seemingly supernatural predator is not named, the feeling created by the repetition, the marching beat and images of contrasting light and dark, create an eerie effect which leave the reader wanting to know more.

Tylah ANSON, 14

*Heywood & District Secondary College
HEYWOOD VIC*

Rangly Dangly Sloth

The wind is blowing through the trees
The leaves are falling off
The old and heavy branches are hanging
Like a rangly, dangly sloth

The rangly, dangly sloth
Is very, very lost
Like the leaves of a tree
When they are falling off

Judge's Comment

I read this poem several times during the judging process and each time it made me smile. It is simple yet cleverly wrought, with its comparison of the wind swept tree to a sloth, and vice-versa. The phrase 'rangly dangly' seems perfectly suited to the movement and stature of the sloth.

Summer WENDEN, 14

*Mackellar Girls High School
MANLY VALE NSW*

Bushfire

Dancing embers fall to the ground,
Oh so swiftly and then comes the sound,
A crackling chant.
A deafening song,
Will it ever end?
So beautiful, yet wrong.

Judge's Comment

This short poem highlights the beauty and horror of the bushfire a topic which seems to be ever topical in Australia. The use of words such as beauty, dancing and chant makes the fire seem at first quite attractive, but the questioning 'Will it ever end?' and the final words 'so wrong' leave us in no doubt that the fire is a foe.

Senior Secondary

Sophie DAVIS, 17

*Merewether High School
BROADMEADOW NSW*

Home Front

she vacuums every Wednesday
stacks the dishwasher, without fail
she dusts
and sometimes some days,
allows herself to check the mail
and mops
and every Thursday morning shops
alone
for fruit and veg and light white milk
and piles of dirty dishes clink
as soapy days wash down the sink

the stain is tough, she'll always try
to make it fade
with eyes bone dry
but it's time to get those kids to school;

Samantha, Max and Jade
all ready in their uniforms
marching out the door
just like the ones who've gone before
marching on the front line
while she's pegging on the clothes line
his t-shirts, socks and shorts
that he won't wear again for months
because there's fights to fight
to win, to lose
and who knows one day he might
"come home"
to the kids who miss their dad
but they miss her too sometimes,
she's always tired now
because when she sleeps
between her freshly ironed sheets,
in her lonely double bed
the only bombs *she* ever hears,
are all inside her head.

Judge's Comment

This well-composed poem paints a melancholy picture of a mother doing her best to carry on in the absence of a husband away at war. The irregular rhyme is an interesting technique which helps the poem to flow almost like stream of consciousness.

Beth DOWNING, 15

*Campbell High School
CAMPBELL ACT*

Autopsy

When she died,
men in lab coats like angel-wings
spread her, perished,
on a silver table -
and with ceremonial scissors,
sliced her flesh into lines, cutting deeply.
Delving into her gut,
they made lists of their discoveries:

there were poems, whole inky poems,
stuck in her ribcage like kites in a tree -
the words whispered when the doctor pulled them out,
and he held them up for the doctors and nurses to listen to.
Next, they searched her kidneys,
finding them full of cobblestones and paving-stones
from a far-off city.
They were piled beside the cadaver,
a small pyramid.

There were photographs filling her stomach,
memories - laughing voices,
bare feet - in the liver,
music filling the heart.

And from her veins,
they pulled a string of quotations.
Words she'd underlined in books,
whispered to herself at 3 AM,
worn from frequent use.

And so, the breakthrough came:
humans are thoughts.

Blood and bone,
cells and atoms -
they are irrelevant, the doctors decided,
in the face of laughing life,
all its shades.

At the time of death,
the breakthrough article in the medical journal proclaimed,
we are nothing but the sum of all we love.

Judge's Comment

A surprising poem, with the reader initially being teased - is this a tale of murder, or something else macabre? The revelation of the final stanzas is a delight.

Jehannah MAY, 16

*Hornsby Girls High School
HORNSBY NSW*

Content

What more is there to life than this?
A beautiful sunset
Music in my ears
And the certainty of an uncertain end

Judge's Comment

Proof that a poem doesn't need to be long to say a lot. Not only does this one bring a smile but it leaves the reader with much to ponder. Lovely.

Huxley FERGUSON, 15

*MET Campus
WAGGA WAGGA NSW*

Ode to 'My Brain'

Thou art like a juicing bundle of puss,
Like worms entangled is thy pulsing form.
This, no doubt is why, thou hid'st. Conscious –
beneath this scalp and skull of mine.
Yet have no fear my beloved brain,
For I love and cherish thee all the same.
Thy presence near is comforting much,
For I know of them who have not such.

Without thee my beloved, splendid brain,
I would then be a cadaverous, lousy heap!
In sleep thou doest take the rein. Whilst I rest –
Thou art in deep contemplation.
Believe me, oh brilliant being of creation,
Thou art no ordinary human decrepitude,
But the vital network of my complex system,
I bear thy co'rdination with gratitude.

Beloved brain how can I bless thee,
For thou hast given me my vocab'lary!
But I thank thee in my conservation,
By masticating vegetation.
I attend my classes for thy health,
And study to augment thy wealth.
And so, though thou art, a spongy ball
Thou aren't a destitute at all.

Judge's Comment

A clever, humorous celebration of the brain, and a solid attempt at the Ode form. Word choices such as 'decrepitude' add to the fun.

Bekka HILLAN, 16

*Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE SA*

Praying Mantis

Jade mantis
Swaying on a leaf
You meditate

Reverent head
Bowed in silence
You pray

Hands clasped
In spiritual peace
You grow

Eyes open
With divine awakening
You nod

Revived soul
Spreads its wings
You fly

Judge's Comment

A beautiful description of the praying mantis, drawing on religious imagery and word choice to excellent effect. The poet creates a vivid picture with just a few words.

Hugh JAMESON, 16

*Sydney Grammar School
DARLINGHURST NSW*

Punchlines

I

I have a friend who likes to think
In politics and other news
And, sharing a late evening drink,
He airs to me his worldly views.
"Our lives are boring, dull indeed!
It gives my soul a burning creed
To think of how we waste our time
On useless jokes and silly rhymes.
Our lives are barely lives at all."
But listening to a man complain
Is really such an awful drain
So, reaching underneath the stall,
I stick my knife into his back.

I bet he didn't think of that.

II

While standing on a peak hour train,
An orgy of primates, we reach
A sudden stop. Oh. How strange!
My neighbour's hair tastes quite like peach!
And tasting such a "sweet delight"
I glimpse something just out of sight:
A seat. Sitting all on it's own,
Would God himself deserve a throne
So mighty and in high regard?
But spotting other famished eyes
I surge towards the sacred prize.
I'll risk myself to battle scars,
No others will surpass my grit.

I simply wouldn't stand for it.

III

He stands, attentive, by the gate,
A lighthouse on a lonely shore.
His buttons pinned, his jacket strait,
He greets the ocean coming forth.
"Good morning ma'am...to level 3?"

It's right this way - just follow me!"
And striding down, at some remark,
He billets a resounding laugh.
Yet, harbouring some crooked teeth,
His golden smile has a slight tint,
His eyes missing their usual glint,
His sparkle drowning, trapped beneath...
The bell rings. No, he won't be late,
He'll stand, attentive, by the gate.

IV

I have a little wooden clock
That on my bedside table breathes.
And while it always ticks and tocks,
The old man sits and slowly grieves.
For years that flew away like birds,
For timeless pastures lost in words,
For boring suits and lifeless ties,
For loneliness among cheap lies.
But with a start, he leaps outside!
And down the road he starts to run,
To stand below the setting sun
And lift it back up to the sky!
But quickly he is overcome:
Time doesn't need a clock to run.

V

My English class is such a bore –
A sloth without a deck of cards.
Through endless talk we seem to drawl,
Yet teachers maintain their façade
That "Fair is foul and foul is fair,"
And crouching, leaping, pouncing, stare
With famished fire at their prey –
Helpless to avoid their fate.
Dissecting why the lamp is blue,
A teacher might well then suggest
The character is most depressed,
When really, it's just painted blue.
Although our books aren't long, as such,
I feel we tend to read too much.

Judge's Comment

A clever collection of punchlines, surprises and observations. Whilst the title suggests jokes, the humour is often very cutting, with each of the five stanzas standing alone to surprise or evoke thought, yet also working as a whole.

Lucy OWEN, 17

*Presbyterian Ladies' College
BURWOOD VIC*

Look upon my works

Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
The looming spires frown upon the street.
Busy people hurry by without a glance,
The shadows drowned beneath a sea of feet.

Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
The sprawling suburbs never seem to stop.
The quarter acre blocks - Australian dream -
Workers tirelessly push to reach the top.

Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
The stink of petrol fills the atmosphere.
Humming engines, blaring horns and slamming doors,
Empty faces stuck in neutral gear.

Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
For this we were entrusted earth and power?
To make this city, built by nameless thousands,
For thousands more, all stuffed in gloomy towers?

Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
A metal monster, home to smog and murk.
True greatness, or a tragic misadventure?
Look upon my works, my mighty works.

Judge's Comment

Clever use of the line from Shelley's Ozymandias. For those familiar with that poem, this provides an intriguing contrast - with modern images of 'progress' being the mighty works. For those who don't know the Shelley poem, this one is still very accessible, with the images of busyness and chaos providing much to despair of.

Irene PARK, 15

*The Kilmore International School
KILMORE VIC*

Paper Ships

Let's sail
paper ships back home
and exchange stories
on the shores
Let's explore
deep dungeons and forgotten forests
in my backyard until mother calls us
in for lunch
Let's plan
our dream house with sandcastles
and when we grow up we will live in it
"This will be your room
and this will be mine"
Let's draw
our family standing outside our house
and the sun on the corner
of the page
Let's imagine
that we are supernatural beings
we have powers that are not of this earth
we can save the world

Let's do all these things

Before we step
on our forts and destroy them
Before we cry
ourselves to sleep
Before we hide
behind masks
Before we drown
in hateful words
that burn on the inside
Before we spit
venom at those
just as weak as us
Before we fall
in to temptation
Before we realise
that snakes come

in all shapes and sizes,
and we let them put scales on
our eyelids
Before we grab
at flesh
and
twist
and
turn
in the mirror
to find imperfections
that are not even there
Before we lose
ourselves to the words of others
who do not understand
the embeddings in our skin
the carving around our hearts
or the holes in each cavity

Before we forget
Let's sail back home

We don't want to get lost

and sail
paper ships
to faraway lands
and break our hearts
on distant shores

Judge's Comment

A powerful poem, with the contrast of innocent childhood and a frightening alternative. The use of the paper ships as the symbol of innocence both at the beginning and in the final lines is effective.

Madeleine STOERMER, 16

*St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School
CORINDA QLD*

Mourning Cycle

I am not who I was last June. I am a stranger now.
That girl is gone, faded into memory,
Made of remembrances and nostalgic haze.
She died a death of her own making,
Lost to the vale of time.
And yet, in these frosted mornings
I find a creature of habit.
A hint of what was,
A footprint left behind.
I am not who I was last June.

~

I buried myself in bright October. I dug a grave and wept.
I mourned my loss, the bereavement heavy
On the head of a girl too old for her years.
I laid to rest my own self,
And stood, alone, facing the abyss.
I hid, a coward, from the endless turn
Of death and life, life and death.
I did not hear the whispers as they called
As they spoke my name of old.
I buried myself in bright October.

~

In storm-torn January I stood alone. A child no more but not a
woman.
I stood, as rain poured down around me,
Too small against the greenish sky.
Feet in water, hands in the sky
A lightning rod made like a girl.
The roar of thunder hid my voice
The rhythm of rain washed me away.
I watched as my world went by,
I cried as my old self would.
In storm-torn January I stood alone.

~

In lonely April I found myself, wrapped like a parcel, self-addressed.
I shook, my fingers clumsy as I unravelled
Layer upon layer, a package of nothing.
My selves stretched out in both directions,
A carnival parade, all different yet the same.
I stared at myself from the eyes of a stranger,
And knew that, just as I had, someday she'd bury me.
Our gazes locked, and in that moment,

It was done.
In lonely April I found myself.

~

Envoi:
So here I stand, different but the same,
There they lie, dead but not gone.

Judge's Comment

A beautiful journey through the stages of grief. The poet/narrator does not tell us what she is grieving for, but allows us to share her sorrow and her growth as she refinds herself. The image of unwrapping herself like a parcel is especially lovely.

Elizabeth WALDRON, 16

*Ravenswood School For Girls
GORDON NSW*

Rain

The fronts of my jeans
Are peppered
With Heaven's gumdrops
Which explode on impact
To reveal
A liquid centre

Judge's Comment

I love this little poem and it's clever little metaphor, capturing delightfully rain drops hitting the wearer's jeans. A poem to make you smile.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary

Lachlan BOLTON, 14

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

MY BEST FRIEND

My best friend was a kite,
We used to go flying,
He always used to smile,
Then came the war,
My kite got put away and was forgotten.

After the war I took him out again but he was not the same,
We never went flying again,
And then he asked me something,
He asked me to set him free.

I cried and cried some more, but I knew he was right,
So one day I loosened my hand and set him free,
Off, off he went into the wind gliding majestically,
High, high above my head, until he could be seen no more.
And now I wonder where he is but one thing's for sure,
The wind will never let him down.

Judge's Comment

A lovely, bittersweet poem with a touch of whimsy. Good use of the competition theme.

Tiana FINA, 13

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

Ginger

My horse stands tall
Green grass all around her
I climb up on her
And I am a princess;
A mermaid on horseback;
A hero chasing the bad guys;
A ghost from the past;
A soldier at war -

Or just me
Being me
As happy as can be!

On my horse -
Ginger and me.

Judge's Comment

A lovely poem of imagination, capturing the joy of horseriding.

Jordan NEWBOLD, 13

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

Floating Socks

Where do you go to?
Where do you hide?
Don't you like me any more?
Don't you want to be my friend?
Where do you go to?

*I am free!
I have escaped!
I am floating away where no one can find me
Where time stands still
Wherever the wind blows*

There were two of you yesterday-
What is going on?
I put you in the wash
I hung you on the line
Where do you go?

*I have gone on a journey
to Mt Kosciuszko;
Trekked the hills of Queensland
And sailed the mighty Franklin in Tassie*

Guess what?
I can't compete with that!
I've been to school and back again
A thousand times over
At least I know
That you, my socks, are still my friend.

Judge's Comment

A fun poem solving the age-old mystery of where missing socks go.

Bradley ORCHARD, 16

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

Creek Flow

Water running over the rocks
Never to be seen again
Gobbled up by the raging surge
And spat out at the ocean mouth

What has the duck missed out on?
A quiet pond on which to bob along

What have the fish missed out on?
Reeds to hide in and congregate around

What has the crocodile missed out on?
A dinner of chicken and potatoes
In the human's stomach!

And the water lilies?
They just sit patiently
Close their faces to the sun
And wait for the flurry of the morning to return
When all creation starts anew

Judge's Comment

I really enjoyed this poem about the flow of water and its impact on nature.



Caught in the Rain

Rain is falling
Washing away the dust.

The wind blows softly
And clears the swaying cobwebs in my head.

The roof of the homestead
Takes the full brunt of the rain.

So do the cows, the sheep and the horses
Although the horses are the lucky ones;
They wear a coat.

The gutters fill quickly
The ground is flooded
The sheep are soaking wet
The pigs are happy.

But I'm not -
No play for me today :(

Judge's Comment

A lovely poem celebrating the contrasting effects of the rain. The final stanza is clever.

Tahlia VELJANOVSKI, 16

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

My Bedroom, My Castle

My room -
I never put anything away
And Mum says that it's a mess.
I don't think that it is
It's *me*,
my bedroom, my castle.

Mum says it's dusty,
Mum says she can't find anything,
Mum says that *her* bedroom was never like this when she was a
girl,
But I don't believe her.
We're too alike.

My bedroom is my castle
And my Mum is my Queen.

Judge's Comment

Many mums - and their children - will relate to this. The final stanza makes me want to hug this mother and daughter pair.

Dylan SURY, 14

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

NUCLEAR WAR

A beautiful day
Birds are singing
Then it all fell away
My thoughts are stinging
Is this the end?

A blinding flash
A burning wind
Turns to ash
The world has sinned
Is this the end?

The blast is close
Running for life
A fatal dose
Pierce like a knife
Is this the end?

Shadows on the wall
Lives now lost
Broken, now I fall
Peace at any cost
This is the end.

Judge's Comment

A chilling, very effective poem, giving the reader a clear picture of the terrible effects of war.

Eliza WARNER, 17

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

The Silver Eagle

The wind is blowing
And Mum is doing the washing -
Again.

It's woolies day today
That's when all the sheep's clothes
Are washed
And hung on the
Silver Eagle.

The wind is spinning the eagle
Round and round and round
He must be getting dizzy by now!

Mum hangs my woolies out in the sun,
And as I look from my window
It looks as if Mum has pegged ME on the line!

Round and round
The wind is blowing
The silver eagle soars
With the sheep's wool on his back
And me not far behind.

Judge's Comment

A lovely word picture of wash day. I love the imagery of eagle, sheep and poet.

Chris T

*Youth Education Centre
CAVAN SA*

Crying Inside

I'll tell you a little story I'll begin at the start
"bout how doin' crime tore my whole life apart.
Went from stealing cars for the adrenalin buzz
To doing house breaks and robbin' kids on the bus.
I learnt from my mistakes and being deceitful,
I need to get a good job and meet a new group of people.
From choosing this pathway I lost my son,
Then a few months later I lost his mum.
But I brought it on myself, from doing things dumb
Stealin' and taking drugs and goin' on the run.
'Cause when they took my son it gave me a fright
I miss changing nappies in the middle of the night.
The whinges and whines, the kicks screams and cries,
And every time I think of him it brings tears to my eyes.
I think about him every night, and I feel my heart and it's cryin'
inside.
No matter what happens I will die with pride
Even though I have that eaten- away feeling inside.
When I get him back I'm gonna hold him so tight,
And never let him go right out of my sight.
I want everyone to know I've rearranged my ways
That I've put my mind to writing, I've changed these days.
So stand up and feel the shiver down your spine
As this sophisticated master mind start spittin' out the rhymes.
And feel the vibe through the crowd that I send,
When I rap so in sequence and keep goin' to the end.
Its flowin' so sequential with high hopes is essential .
So I'll keep writin' and keep rappin' till I reach my potential.

Judge's Comment

This heartfelt poem brought tears to my eyes and, as the poet suggests, a shiver down my spine. Great use of rhyme and rhythm, too.

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

2013 Anthology

COMMENDED

Lower Primary

Upper Primary

Learning Assistance Primary

Junior Secondary

Senior Secondary

Learning Assistance Secondary

Lower Primary**Isabel DUGGAN, 9**

*Loreto Mandeville Hall
TOORAK VIC*

Being Nine

My Birthday was just recently,
It was rather fine.
I can't believe how old I am,
Right now I am nine.

But don't think it's all good,
It has its ups and downs.
Sometimes there are smiles,
And sometimes there are frowns.

And sometimes it's not good,
Sometimes it's pretty bad.
But you always seem to get over it,
Even if you're extra mad.

But most of the time it's good,
You seem to be full of laughter.
Except when you are asked to do your chores,
Your response is always 'after'.

But when you're nine you're tall enough,
To go on all the rides.
Up and Down and round and round,
And even on its sides.

And when you're nine you're taller,
Bigger than last year,
And when you're nine you're braver
You seem to have no fear.

My younger years behind me,
My older years to be.
Being nine is awesome
Because it's all about being me.

Judge's Comment

A joyful, honest celebration of being who you are and accepting the good with the bad, whether you are nine or ninety!

Marlon ARCHER, 6

*Fitzroy Community School
NORTH FITZROY VIC*

The Wind

The wind is blowing
The grass
The wind is blowing
Hard

The tiger runs while
The wind blows
The tiger runs
In the bush

I see it
Run
It is hunting with
The help of the wind

Judge's Comment

One of the things I love about this poem is the way the poet repeats certain words as though to make sure the reader knows they are important. The wind is blowing, the tiger is running. They are a team, these two, helping one another. A small poem with strong imagery.

Will CARTER, 9

*St Joseph's Primary School
WONTHAGGI VIC*

I Saw a Dragon

I saw a dragon
I saw a big dragon
I saw a green, big dragon
I saw a green, scaly, big dragon
I saw a fire breathing, green, scaly, big dragon
It was a chicken

Judge's Comment

The last line of this poem is a conundrum. I'm still not sure if the creature portrayed is a *cowardly* dragon or if Will's fine imagination has conjured up a dragon from a hen! But regardless of this, the poem is very engaging and I love the way each line builds the dragon up into something more and more magnificent. Well done Will.

Lara ATHERDEN, 7

*Hawkesbury Independent School
GROSE VALE NSW*

Satin Bowerbird

Bright lilac-blue eyes
Foraging in the forest
Buzzing, hissing, whistling
Building and decorating their bower
A blue detector!

Judge's Comment

This short poem describes the attributes of the Satin Bower bird very well, but it was the very original final line that really won me - a blue detector - brilliant!

Will FAURE, 9

*Cranbrook Junior School
ROSE BAY NSW*

Refugee Children

We come from wrecked and torn lands,
We have come to live in peace,
We do not have clean water,
Our bellies are as big as a spiders,
Our backyard is a battle field,
We pay money to go on an unstable boat,
We are refugees.

Judge's Comment

A small poem with a big message. The language is simple but evocative with phrases like: '*a backyard like battlefield*'. I was particularly impressed by the description of the malnourished bodies of refugee children. Well done.

Charlotte EDWARDS, 8

*Holy Family Primary School
GRANVILLE EAST NSW*

Wherever the Wind Blows

Wherever the wind blows
The summer tree follows
Backward and forward, left and right
The green tree moves all day and all night

Wherever the wind blows
The autumn tree follows
The leaves turning red, yellow and brown
The wind blows them to the ground

Wherever the wind blows
The winter tree follows
Branches are bare and cold
And grow icicle beards like they are old

Wherever the wind blows
The spring tree follows
With new leaves growing
Their new beauty is showing

Wherever the wind blows
The trees always follow
They bend and they stand
And will forever be grand

Judge's Comment

This poem draws our attention to the relationship between wind and trees throughout the four seasons. And although this poem is about change, the repetition of the first line in each stanza is comforting.

Group Poem, Kindergarten

*Redeemer Baptist School
North Parramatta NSW*

Does the Wind Blow Under the Sea?

Is it really so different under the sea?
Does the wind blow there too?
Does it rush and whoosh?
Does it pull and push?
Ebb and flow, to and fro?
I think the wind blows under the sea.
Bubbles are balloons-
They float in the breeze and burst.
Seaweed is grass-
Swaying and bending in the breeze.
Stingrays are eagles-
Wings wide soaring on wind currents.
Jellyfish are kites-
Long streamers to hold as they blow to and fro.
Fish are birds-
Flocks riding the currents through a big blue sky.
So does the wind blow under the sea?
I think so. Do you?

Judge's Comment

A refreshingly different and thoughtful poem. The imagery is unique and wonderful, and so too is the use of metaphor.

Sophia MACDONALD, 8

*St Michaels Collegiate School
HOBART TAS*

Words in the Wind

Breeze, rustling through the trees,
wind scribbled down like little words.
Everywhere scattered, rakes coming to brush
the delicate little words up.
Flying around in circles
making poems and stories.
Coming from every direction,
words and colours,
finally settling down in their books,
whispering each other good night stories
and the dictionary catching the last letter
Zzzzzzzzz!

Judge's Comment

A lovely, playful poem with a very clever conclusion.



Two Fruits

i.

I love the white nectarine,
the colour is as red as a rose,
it smells fresh like it's just been picked.
The nectarine's skin looks like stars in a red galaxy,
the top is like a swirl of yellow sunlight,
the flavour spreads all over your tongue,
not too soft, not too hard
in your mouth,
crunch, crunch, crunch.

ii.

The apple is sweet and bitter,
crisp and crunchy,

as white as winter wonderland.
 Tiny pips fall from the apple
 clattering on the table
 like little boats on the waves,
 like people sinking, trying to breathe.
 As the lights turn off
 they shine in the moonlight.

Judge's Comment

This pair of lovely poems reminds me of a still life painting. The poet has used words that stimulate all the reader's senses: sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing. Simile has been used to great effect, but perhaps my favourite part of these twin poems is the metaphor of the apple seeds being boats.

Rachel MATHEWS, 6

*Wahroonga Public School
 WAHROONGA NSW*

Ants In The Classroom

There are ants in the classroom and they are bothering me
 I just don't know what the reason can be.

It looks like they are coming all over the floor
 They might be thousands or many more.

We asked the teacher, "What shall we do?"
 But the teacher said I haven't got a clue.

There are ants in the classroom and they are bothering me
 I just don't know what the reason can be.

We asked the cleaner to spread stuff on the floor
 But the ants kept coming more than ever before.

We told the principal we cannot play
 He said, "Let's close the school and have a holiday!"

Judge's Comment

The poet has a good sense of rhythm and I enjoyed the way the poem was set out in two stanzas repeating and reinforcing the unsolved problem - those ants. And best of all was the wonderful resolution to the problem. Well done!

Amy HARROWER, 9

*St Philip's Christian College
WARATAH NSW*

Captain Jack the Pirate Cat

Captain Jack the pirate cat
Only has one eye.
So he's clumsy and quirky
And isn't very sly.

Captain Jack the pirate cat
Has a big fat belly.
When he runs down the hall
It wobbles just like jelly.

Captain Jack the pirate cat
Acts just like a clown.
He's frisky and funny
And he doesn't wear a frown.

Captain Jack the pirate cat
Is big and round and black.
He's playful, loving and chatty.
He's my brother's cat.

Captain Jack the pirate cat
Doesn't wear a patch.
But things like wool and pipe cleaners
He really likes to snatch.

Captain Jack the pirate cat
Isn't really a crook.
He's scared of shadows and isn't very brave.
Actually, he's just a sook.

Judge's Comment

A delightful poem about a family pet. The poet is obviously very familiar with all the quirks of her brother's cat. The humour adds to the charm of the poem and for me the funniest thing was the cat's name being so completely opposite to his character. A very enjoyable poem.

Gina MCDONALD, 8

*Iford Public School
ILFORD NSW*

The Old Stone House

The old stone house is standing there,
Close to the oak in the cold winter's air.

Owls outside hooting away,
They'd come inside if things went their way.

Creaking stairs that haunt my dreams,
Very old paintings with tragic themes.

Ghostly calls in the night,
All the time giving me a fright.

The church next door has a grave and a tree,
And the whistling wind whispers to me.

But the house itself is a secret place,
With a breeze that feels like silky lace.

The old stone house is still standing there,
Close to the oak in the warm spring air.

Judge's Comment

A very atmospheric poem. The repetition of the introductory lines reinforces a feeling of nostalgia at the conclusion.

Yannick SPLINTER, 7

*North Ainslie Primary School
AINSLIE ACT*

* * *

The bullet missed
The snake hissed
His legs turned
to jello

Judge's Comment

Just eleven expertly chosen words have been used to create a very scary poem. Well done!

Oliver O'CALLAGHAN, 9

Curtin Primary School
CURTIN ACT

When the Wind is High

When the wind is high
Night is grey moonful
Leaves rustling like scales
Wind stripping the cliff face.
Handle turns
Face pressed by wind
Cobwebs frighten, trapping you in
Shivers travel, trembling down my spine
As the wind cries like abandoned babies
As your breath is held.

Judge's Comment

The poet has displayed some very creative ways with words. The next time I am out on a moonlit night, I will remember the word 'moonful' and when I hear the wind cry, I won't be able to stop myself thinking of abandoned babies. I like the way the poem ends abruptly - leaving the reader to imagine what might happen next. A poem filled with tension.

Logan RADFORD, 8

Central Coast Grammar School
ERINA HEIGHTS NSW

The Skeleton Tree

Perched in a lonely valley
the skeleton tree
leans toward the sun.

Lost, unable to be seen for miles.

It is cold and scared
as the winter wind rushes
through its branches.

Judge's Comment

An excellent word painting. No tricks, just simple well chosen words. Well done.

Jessica ROSE, 9

*Chairo Christian School
DROUIN VIC*

My Library

It is only a room with shelves and books, but it is far more magical
than it looks
It's a jet on which I soar to lands that exist no more
Or a key which I find answers to questions crowding my mind
Building my habit of learning and growing, asking and researching
till I reach knowing
Here I've been a mermaid and an elf. I've even learned to be more
myself
I think that I shall never see a place that's been more useful to me
With encouraging kind friends who tell me to dream big and never
quit
It's only a room with shelves and books, but it's far more magical
than it looks!

Judge's Comment

There are many things which I enjoyed about this poem, amongst them the repetition of the first line at the conclusion. The lines between them tell the reader exactly why this is so. There are many appealing phrases, but one of my favourites is this: *'I've even learned to be more myself.'*

In a few places, the rhythm isn't quite right, but as the poet, herself, says *'building my habit of learning and growing, asking and researching till I reach knowing'*, so I feel sure she will become better at this with practice.

Alex TRAN, 8

*Knox Grammar Preparatory School
WAHROONGA NSW*

Tornado

I am a giant,
Spinning around like a vortex,
I destroy anything in my path,
People try to run and hide, but
I am a finder.

I am a monster,
Howling at the land below,
I am sucking things up and
Spitting them out,
I make a wild mess.

I am a portal,
Between space and Earth,
I provide trips at warp speed
To unwilling travellers,
I am so, so feared.

I am a puzzle,
For scientists and meteorologists,
I am a force of nature,
They want to study me inside,
I forbid that act.

I am a funnel,
Creating dust clouds,
I bring pelting rainstorms and
Flashes of lightning,
I am like a god.

I am a phoenix,
Appearing from nowhere,
I am a magical mystery,
With violent colossal powers, back into the sky
I will disappear.

I am a twister,
My tail randomly rips a route,
I love to be catastrophic,
Watch out!
I'm coming for you!

Judge's Comment

The poet has used a wide vocabulary and has displayed his command of metaphor and simile in his exciting poem.

Upper Primary

Ayrat BAYANOV, 12

*Sutherland Public School
SUTHERLAND NSW*

Shifting Sands

The shifting sands sway
And stormy winds tumble seas
But love, I never doubt.

Judge's Comment

This poet has skilfully left much unsaid and we are left with only the most necessary words.

Ella-Rose CARTHEW-WOOD, 12

*Coffee Camp Public School
COFFEE CAMP NSW*

Writing On A Beach

A stick dipped into the sea's frothy ink;
The long stretching beach with peppery sand its table to write on.
Footprints are commas, pearls of seaweed are exclamation marks!
Here comes the tideerasing.....refreshing.....recycling.

Judge's Comment

A metaphoric poem full of atmosphere. The final line highly evocative of the rhythm of waves on wet sand.

Alec BERG, 9

*Knox Grammar Preparatory School
WAHROONGA NSW*

The Horn Blows

My heart, trapped inside these notes, filled with beauty
The sound flutters out, as if autumn leaves.
The notes blow so smoothly
Anticipation, excitement, happiness and sorrow
Mixed emotions whenever I blow into my horn.
Wherever the wind blows.

I think back to past notes, remembering my schoolboy band
Performing for the other years
Still learning, producing wrong notes
I am shy but excited.
The horn not yet perfect
Going wherever the wind blows.

Studying hard in high school.
As I practise and perform,
The notes form a warm breeze around me
Dancing to the rhythm of my soul.
Comfortable, this could be my future
Wherever the wind blows.

Exams at the conservatorium
Rehearsals and auditions
The wind is carrying me and I soar high and far
Performing at concerts
The audience applauding the sound of my horn
Wherever the wind blows

I see the daily news, an orchestra review.
Seeing my golden name
I triumph in my head.
I walk back to my horn
Because this is where it has taken me,
Wherever the wind blows

Here I am at the glittering Met in New York
The wind has brought me to this breathtaking moment
My lips tingle with excitement and I hear the applause
The curtain raised, I step out into the bright lights,
Take a deep breath and start to blow.
Wherever the wind took me.

Judge's Comment

An insightful view of the journey of a musician from his boyhood dreams to their fulfilment and a thoughtful response to this year's theme 'Wherever the Wind Blows'.

Mia CAMERON, 10

*Abbotsleigh Junior School
WAHROONGA NSW*

Old Dog

Old Dog lies
Greying, fading
A quill running dry
Life evading

His world is dimming
Clouds gather in his eyes
He hears in whispers
The wild galahs' cries

Once a protector
Herding sheep
Across sun bleached hills
And valleys deep

Fetching flock from pen to field
Gently nipping wayward heels
Riding on a rusty ule
Old Dog was indeed a beaut

At his master's side always
As the sun rises everyday
Ever loyal, faithful, true
Old Dog-That'll do.

Judge's Comment

A well written, moving and evocative ballad about the bond between a dog and his master.

Joshua CASPARI , 9

*Knox Grammar Preparatory School
WAHROONGA NSW*

My Team

I'm churned up. I'm ready to go.
I heave my bag to the door.
The heat greets my body as I push open the gate.
I race into the car, my heart beating fast.
Better get there quick, don't want to be last.

I see grass as lush as a rainforest
As I scramble out of the car.
I spy my team in a tight huddle,
Their whites shining in the brilliant sun.
My coach calls out, "Come on mate, quickly, run!"

I gaze down at the pristine pitch.
As I grip the ball tight in my hand.
The smell of new leather fills my nostrils
The coach pulls me aside - "I'd like you to be our captain today,"
We need to you lead the way."

The team talks tactics
As we embrace the conditions on the field.
I consult the anxious opening bowler.
"Let's play our finest cricket
And start the innings with a wicket."

I squint at the bowler, sweat trickling down my face.
He takes his run up, feet thundering on the ground.
Ball slams into pitch. Willow edges ball.
It rockets into my hands just missing the stump.
I throw my hand skyward - "Howzat ump?"

As the searing sun retreats, the team dawdles off the field.
Exhausted but satisfied.
Weary but exhilarated.
Faded ball, ripped pants, torn gloves.
We've given our all for the game we love.

Judge's Comment

I'm not a fan of cricket, but I do like this poem. Why? Because the poet has created atmosphere, emotion and tension. I feel the heat, sense the inner turmoil, smell the grass, know the exhilaration of success.

The use of dialogue is also very effective, progressing the poem without long explanations. The poem is largely free form but the rhyming couplets at the end of each verse bring a nice conformity. Well done.

Catrina CHU, 12

*Waverley Christian College
WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC*

My Family

My family is like the layers of a rainforest.

My mother is the forest floor of the jungle
Nourishing and watering the roots of the forest.

My father is the canopy
Protecting and watching over the understory.

My sisters are the understory
Leafy and green, protecting the floor
Full of life and light.

And I am the emergent layer
The youngest of all
Allowing the rain to shower over me.

Judge's Comment

A thoughtful and well-written allegory of a loving and supportive family structure.

Ben DAVIES, 11

*Rangeview Primary School
MITCHAM VIC*

Diamonds

Shapes of light
With a deadly edge
And a sparkling crust

Judge's Comment

Spare, precise and beautiful.

Meera DOOLABH, 9

*St Michaels Collegiate School
HOBART TAS*

Frog

soft skin, an emerald shade
lips blue, midnight jade
pale underbelly just like grass
yellow eyes like blown up glass

leaping through the gooey mud
landing with a gentle thud
stretching out flexible legs
swinging back like a wooden peg

looking through the misty fog

frog

Judge's Comment

This poet has used a palette of delicate colours to paint a wonderful word picture.

Ronan DOYLE-MURRELL, 11

*Sutherland Public School
SUTHERLAND NSW*

Growth

Quickly it races,
Its white skin flashing against its blue realm,
Flukes thrashing around,
Eye-catching flashes of white
A whale in the sky.

Judge's Comment

I am a paid up member of the Cloud Appreciation Society. I, too, see whales in the sky. A lovely metaphoric poem. Thank you, Ronan, and well done.

Timothy DUFF, 10

*Central Coast Grammar School
ERINA HEIGHTS NSW*

The Meteorologist

The grass may be green, and the sky may be blue,
But how's the wind made, and what does it do?
Is it made in a fan put up in the sky?
Is it blown from the breath of a man passing by?
Is it caused by a puff of a chimney's warm fire?
Is it conjured from songs of a musical choir?
There are some ideas on how wind is created,
But what does it do? It must clearly be stated!
Does it really far and go round a bend?
Does it hit a great wall and meet its own end?
Does it lose energy and disperse in the sky?
Or go on forever, like time passing by?
Whatever the way the wind blows or it flows,
We'll never know how, or where, the wind goes.

Judge's Comment

Poems that ask questions sometimes leave the reader feeling unsatisfied. However in *The Meteorologist*, the poet not only asks the questions but gives a variety of responses to them. An entertaining, thought provoking poem with a good sense of rhythm.

Samantha GREENWOOD, 10

*Sutherland Public School
SUTHERLAND NSW*

The Fox

Slinking from the wood's edge,
A fox, one paw raised, surveys,
The open meadows.

Judge's Comment

A still life study, a portrait of a moment in time. Lovely.

Eliza FAGAN, 12

*Abbotsleigh Junior School
WAHROONGA NSW*

The Colours of the Wind

The wind is the brush
that mixes the colours
of Nature's palette.

The wind paints the wide background blue
when it clears the cloudy skies,
stirs the deep seas and
skims the many lakes.

The wind streaks the land with shades of green
when it brushes the rolling hills,
rustles the emerald grass and
plants the majestic gums.

The wind adds highlights of white
when it scatters the cotton clouds,
sprays the chilling snow and
adds foamy crests to the waves.

The wind mixes in some earthy tones
when it carries the rich desert dust,
strips the autumn leaves and
snaps off giant branches.

The wind spreads around bright yellow
when it breathes on the wattle puffs,
exposes the welcome sun and
flings the golden beach sand.

The wind dabs brilliant touches of red
when it lifts a kite into the sky,
fans the wicked bushfires and
sweeps that wide-brimmed hat over a cliff.

The wind mutes the tones with black and grey
when it whips up the stormy skies,
drives the soaking rain and
casts shadows over the landscape.

The wind mixes and blends Nature's colours
to create a masterpiece.

Judge's Comment

A thoughtful and observant poem beautifully written.

Macklin FITZGERALD, 10

*Tamworth Public School
TAMWORTH NSW*

The Wind

The wind is a gentle friend
Rescuing balls stuck in trees,
Flying kites,
Cooling on a hot day,
Drying the washing,
Making wind energy,
Sailing boats,
Tinkling wind chimes.

The wind is a mischievous child
Invisible,
Stealing hats,
Stinging legs at the beach,
Blowing up dresses and skirts,
Rattling windows,
Playing with leaves,
Twirling clothes lines.

The wind is an evil spirit.. ...
Bad tempered,
Unstoppable,
Slamming doors,
Making washing fly away,
Tornadoes, water spouts, storms, cyclones,
Howling,
It is wicked.

Judge's Comment

The poet has personified the wind differently in each of the three stanzas, cleverly indicating its changing nature.

Tansy FLYNN, 10

*Perth College
MT LAWLEY WA*

What is a Cloud?

A Cloud is a white soft pillow, floating in a bed of blue.
It is a bouquet of white roses wrapped in blue paper.
It's a hat of white straw shading you from the sun.
It's an angel's wing, on a piece of blue paper.
It is whipped cream, on a cake of blue icing.
A Cloud is a cotton bud, floating in the calm sea.
It is white coral, dropped from heaven.

Judge's Comment

Beautiful and unique metaphors.

Josh GEORGE, 11

*Tamworth Public School
TAMWORTH NSW*

* * *

A spark in the wilderness
Fuelled by the arid earth beneath
Flames overwhelm the surroundings
Writhing arms lunging from the red, hot ground
A never-ending storm of smoke lurks above
Wrapping and consuming everything
Like a tsunami of heat and fury
Rushing and roaring, not considering its prey
Blazing and enduring many days and nights
Burning embers swirling in a mad frenzy
To the movement of the ever-changing wind
And as the flames die down
Leaving nothing but a charred heap
Nature's way of life resumes

Judge's Comment

This poem captures the life of a wildfire, from birth through its frenzied furious life to death. The final line reminding us of earth's power of renewal. Well done.

Caitlin HICKEY, 11

*Oxford Falls Grammar School
OXFORD FALLS NSW*

Scarred For Life

Cardinal streak
Excruciating ache
A white smudge
Is all that's left
Amber eyes
Haunt me in my dreams
Jaundiced specks
Scattered across his face
As if he was
A spoiled painting
His legs were coiled springs
Cyan sky was behind us
Spread across the Earth like
A picnic blanket
Now I rest on my mahogany bed
Some people are scared of the dark,
Spiders,
But as for me
Nothing is worse
Than the cat

Judge's Comment

A very clever word picture with unique, thought provoking metaphors and similes - even the title is a play on words.

Erin JACKSON, 11

*Wycliffe Christian School
BLAXLAND NSW*

The Sea

The sea is a watery beast
With teeth as sharp as a whetted knife,
Cutting through the rocks at night
Oily blue and groaning grey
It howls and twists and turns,
Swallowing unknown sailors,
And spitting out the bones.

Judge's Comment

The poet has used alliteration and metaphor to create a striking image of the sea.

Vivienne KEW, 12

Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW

FEAR

My heart thumps louder and louder,
My tongue offended with a sickening taste.
My legs shake uncontrollably,
I am silenced by fear.

My actions filled with trepidation,
My eyes blinded by anxiety,
I freeze with indecision and doubt,
I am crippled by fear.

Stranded in the middle of nowhere,
My body goes numb,
My spirit lies dead,
I am orphaned by fear.

But if there are those who believe in me,
Those who believe I can fight,
Then I will fight,
For I am saved by hope.

Judge's Comment

The poet has used the poem's structure to great effect: three stanzas detailing the paralysing effects of fear, each one summarised in its last line - and the final verse, a triumph of hope.

Sappirah KNIGHT, 12

*Coonabarabran Public School
COONABARABRAN NSW*

Spin Around Lacy

Spin around Lacy,
Spin around girl.
Waving through the country
An outback pearl.

With heads held high,
And grass tassles low,
Ready for the season,
When the grain is said to sew.

The yards are filled with cattle,
Their bellows deafen the ear,
But if they stay, feed is limited
Not enough is what we fear.

We heard the rain is coming,
But if it will isn't certain,
The ground is all dry and cracked,
So a little won't be hurtin'.

The trusty dog will yelp,
When the goats go run.
So off she goes to bring them back.
All in the morning sun.

Great Pa is in the saddle.
Father's on the bike.
Everyone's outside working.
Until the lightning strike.

Rain gushes down with the rapid river,
The stockman exhales with stroof.
But the sound is quite relieving,
The pitter-patter on an old tin roof.

An Akubra is on one hook
Along with a Driza-bone.
Without them no one leaves
The front porch step of home.

When the home fires start to burn,
And the first frosts start to bite,
You can almost be certain,
That Winter's within sight.

But the morning sun rises,
And melts the Autumn dew.
The paddocks re-emerge,
Our farm is all brand new.

So when the tanks are full and the crops are in,
We're really a happy lot.
Until it happens again next year,
And we're back in the same old spot.

Judge's Comment

The poet has drawn a wonderful picture of the joys and struggles of family life in rural Australia.

Apsara LINDEMAN, 11

*Mosman Public School
MOSMAN NSW*

The Khmer Smile Returns

A river of colour
Sienna and Ochre
Saffron and Mustard.

Monks passed by like petals
falling from a flame tree.

Silent and solemn
balls of rice planted
in their alms bowls .

They weaved through sleepy streets
with strong religious belief.

The morning ritual in Phnom Penh - the city awakens.

Motodop!

Tuk tuk!
people cried. Mayhem rose.

The markets alive - another steaming day.

People rush in – rush out
You want to buy
Madam?
I sell you very good price.

Agile boats glide up
the coffee river.
The Mekong full with the
wet season.

The rice seedlings
Rain they howled
but all that was heard were whispers
Chinese whispers.

Palms waved
they danced
beckoning to join them.

Lianas climbed
Epiphytes drooped
Vines seized trespassers
A hidden kingdom appeared
from dense jungle.

Angkor Wat
Emerging Warriors
guard their ancient site
their home.

Heavenly beings - Angels - Apsaras
centuries old yet so young
their faces
their smiles
they possess.

Time and evil
cloaked Cambodia
genocide and suspicion
winds of change.

Red ants stealthily stalked
monsters - the Khmer rouge.

Year Zero
many suffered
The red soldiers ruled.

Lost ghosts
they roam - killed
searching for lost loved ones.

Pol Pot gone
but families no where
displaced - dust bowl - poverty
the winds changed, but
no return to the past.

Hope - determination for
food
a home
a bicycle
a pig.

Soon boys, girls
white shirts
bags hanging
skip in playgrounds
schools return
the wind changes direction.

Markets - a cacophony of bargains
puffs of morning saffron robes
dancing Apsaras
stone faces emerge from the jungle
beauty of the past reclaimed
patis of vibrant green
the winds of fortune promised.

The Khmer smile returns.

Judge's Comment

The reader is transported as this poem stimulates all the senses. At once a glorious celebration of nature and the strength of the human spirit.

Hannah MCGOWAN, 11

*St Michaels Collegiate School
HOBART TAS*

Book of Birds

The smooth white pages,
the bold black words,
the crinkled leather cover,
a book about birds.

Detailed illustrations,
of elegant winged creatures,
the pale pastel colours,
and tiny bright features.

Swifts and Sparrows,
Eagles and Hawks,
different species,
an enormous range of squawks.

Feathers falling softly,
their colours light the sky.
people look up,
as they float gracefully by.

When I read,
I travel through time,
to another realm
where the birds' eyes shine.

Judge's Comment

Lovers of books, of birds and of poetry will all enjoy this poem. The first and last stanzas act as covers of the book, the second to fourth its contents. The poet has an excellent sense of rhythm and I particularly enjoyed the final, personal, stanza which gives us insight into the effect reading has on her.

Sarah MELAMED, 9

*Masada College
LINDFIELD NSW*

When the Wind Blows

I am crushed between grandpa and the damp, creaky, salt-crusted
boat,
Moaning as it endures the weight of all these scared, sad people
And the rough waters
Breaking over us all –
Salty, bitter
Like my tears
Which won't stop
Falling.
But the waves on our bodies are shivery wet slaps, and my tears
are warm and quiet, and they don't stop
Falling.
The stench from the crates of old stale food fills my nose, and
grandpa's breath is warm over my head.
The sky is red with a dying sun
Clouds march sternly across – just like the soldiers.
And the wind whispers: Do you remember?
Your parents' panicked faces ...That baby ...The fires and guns ...
And now another baby screams – on the boat,
Hungry, terrified. Like me.
And the wind whispers more:
Will you die here?
Will you reach Australia?
Will you ever see the little yellow canary again?
I tell the wind:
I am Nam-Houng.
I am 9 years old.
And then I cry again –
Because I do not know if I will ever see my parents again.

Judge's Comment

A mature, insightful and moving poem. This young poet has deeply
imagined a traumatic experience which most of us can never truly
comprehend. Well done.

Mitra MOUSAVI, 11

*Botany Public School
BOTANY NSW*

Poetree

A seed is planted
an idea has risen
the little poetree starts to grow

Taller it stretches
bigger it becomes
filled with
wisdom, laughter and love

So many ideas
so many thoughts
structure is added
devices too
the once little poetree is fully grown
and a new one begins

Judge's Comment

This unique and lovely allegoric poem cleverly illustrates the creative process.

Sharbel NADAL, 11

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

FREEDOM

Formalised by the laws that protect it.
Recognised in a flag that stands for it.
Epitomised in those who have lost it.
Exercised by those who easily forget it.
Despised by those who want more of it.
Ostracised by those who resent it.
Memorialised by those who have died for it.
Freedom.

Judge's Comment

A sophisticated acrostic poem with an interesting use of verbs. The poet clearly has excellent comprehension and a wide vocabulary.

Claudia ORESKOVIC, 11

*St Michaels Collegiate School
HOBART TAS*

One Timeless Moment
Inspired by the short animation, "Paperman"

George's feet padded against the grey concrete,
his arm grasping the documents tightly,
he sighed heavily, a train zooming past him at the station,
his attention was captured as he heard more footsteps.

Walking past him was a young woman,
glossy, dark brown hair, flowing past her shoulders,
lips as plump as a fruit, covered in cherry red lipstick,
she gave him quick glance, and a small smile.

She looked as delicate as a flower,
as sweet as a peach,
the wind howled like a wolf,
sending one of George's documents in flight like a bird.

It swirled and whirled like a ballet dancer,
he tried to catch it,
it flew out of his grasp,
it landed on the girl's face.

With widened eyes, he pulled it off gently,
the girl looked at the document,
and giggled at the red lipstick mark,
remaining as a stain, and a memory.

A moment that was disconnection, became attraction,
the man looked up to laugh,
the girl had disappeared,
boarding a speeding train.

Judge's Comment

This poem does indeed capture a moment and beautifully so. In six stanzas the poet manages to convey so much about the two characters concerned and we, the readers, are left with a sense of wistfulness and wonder.

Arlo PULLMAN, 10

*Sutherland Public School
SUTHERLAND NSW*

The Shipwreck

At the bottom of the ocean, where the tides work their will,
There lies an ancient shipwreck,
A hulking shadow, lying still
From the bow-gun, to the Captain's Quarters,
Things begin to stir, scaring shoals of fish and krill,
The sea is silent until,

The mottled bones and salt-wrecked clothes,
That's all that's left of men long dead,
All they remember is to fight,
As they wake in the middle of the night,
Their pale bones shimmer with a ghostly light,
With a creak and a squeak of fleshless feet,
And a grind and a groan of things unknown,
They wake,

And though their guns no longer shoot,
And though devoid of coat or boot,
They walk rotten planks and corroded steel,
They do not see they simply feel,
With a creak and a squeak of fleshless feet,
And a grind and a groan of things unknown,
They are awake, but still they sleep.

Judge's Comment

A gruesome, grisly and thoroughly enjoyable poem!

Matthew WOO, 11

*Sutherland Public School
SUTHERLAND NSW*

Sea Wolves

Vikings on a ship,
sea salt landing on faces,
following a star.

Judge's Comment

A very evocative haiku. I taste the salt, see the star. Well done.

Lachie WHITE, 9

*Knox Grammar Preparatory School
WAHROONGA NSW*

The Ice Hotel

The ice hotel was brand new
And it glowed a chilly blue.
It sounds like it would be cold
Just like a Viking's house of old.
It was actually warm and snug
And felt like a giant hug.
My bed was a block of ice
But I didn't sleep on it twice
Because one night was all I had
I was a lucky lad.

A reindeer skin kept me warm
I stayed snuggly until dawn.
For breakfast we had tundra produce
The highlight was warm lingonberry juice.

It snowed everyday
But we would still go out and play
We would lie down in the snow
The chill would make our faces glow.
We were there at Christmas time
So the cheerful bells would often chime.

It was a holiday I'll always remember
I hope I go back there another December.

Judge's Comment

This poem appeals to all the senses but one. It provides us with word pictures and invites us to experience the unfamiliar with the poet. It is like a holiday postcard from an unfamiliar destination.

Gwynneth TAN, 12

Caladenia Primary School
CANNING VALE WA

Four Seasons

The old man sits in his rocking chair,
Hat pulled down low over his eyes.
Book askew on his lap,
Spectacles out of place.
Reminiscing about seasons past,
And the winter soon approaching.

Once, when the sun was young and content,
When the scent of flowers filled the air,
And the grass grew green and fresh,
Butterflies escaped from their prison;
The trees would reach out with their creaking arms,
Searching for warmth and comfort.

When springtime arrived,
The world would rejoice,
With picnic baskets and food.
Laughter would ring out from open windows,
The children's smiles would light the way,
And fun was one to never disappear.

Then came the time when the sun burned bright and strong,
Rays raging from the start of dawn.
Though the plants grew parched and withered,
There was beauty everywhere too.
It was also a time when sunflowers showed their true selves,
When patios and tree houses were built for shelter.

When summertime showed its face,
Some would stay inside shielded from the sun,
Joy would come from television screens and video game controllers.
Other crowds would swarm to water,
Building sandcastles and surfing waves were a pride for many,
Teenagers clothed in beachwear was a common sight.

Then, when leaves turned auburn, amber and gold,
Gliding gently downwards to the forest floor,
Temperatures drop a few degrees,
As slight breezes transform into billowing winds.
Animals scuttled across leaf-scattered ground
Migrating to warmer lands.

When autumn appeared,
Indoors would be the best place to stay.
The delicious smell of warming soups,

Hot pies and roasts would surround houses.
The chore of raking leaves in piles,
Was something that repeated itself everyday.

Then, the last season of the year,
Winter, would come.
A white blanket of frost would cover the land,
And numbing chills would force people to hide.
Sitting by fires and heating up was all that some did,
This season was never thought of as a pleasure.

The old man brought himself out of his thoughts,
Knowing that winter was near.
He had discovered, long ago,
That this time would come for everyone.
Preparing himself for winter,
The old man closed his eyes and was free.

Judge's Comment

A tender, touching poem of an old man's memories.

Class Poem, YEAR 6

*St Xavier's Primary School
GUNNEDAH NSW*

When the wind blows...

When the wind blows,
the Plains grass shimmers in the afternoon light
the birds stir from their nests amongst the cotton,
the windmill creaks as it cranks into life,
the Kurrawong fills the quiet air with its warble,
the road train rattles along the stock route in a cloud of dust,
the washing sways to and fro on the line.

When the wind blows,
the lambs frolic on the Lucerne flats,
the cattle nuzzle each other in the feedlot,
the Kelpie pup is rounding up the hens,
the coal train can be heard as it rattles down the line,
the tractor stops to refill the seeder,
the Church bells ring,

When the wind blows,
the ice cream truck plays its melody,
the spray coop does another pass,
the children play sport with their teams,
the smell of hot bread wafts down the main street
the cars move over as another wide-load comes through town,
the children play under the sprinkler on the lawn.

When the wind blows,
the school bell rings,
the cat in the hay shed awakens from her sleep,
the smell of a Sunday roast drifts down the lane,
the auctioneer's voice at the Saleyards can be heard in town,
the rusty gate plays a tune of its own,
the Eucalypts fill the air with their scent.

When the wind blows we are at home, here on the Breeza Plains.

Judge's Comment

This poem tantalises all the senses and stirs the imagination. Long-forgotten memories are awakened in the reader. A wonderfully observant poem.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Primary

Dawit ABEBE, 10

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

FASCINATING WIND

The wind is

controlling skies
encouraging eagles
demanding grass
whipping leaves
captivating children
stalking clouds
tickling grass
rocking trees
pushing leaves
restraining branches
scheming skies
drawing the twilight.

The wind is fascinating.

Judge's Comment

This poet teams verbs and nouns in unique yet appropriate pairs. The final line summarises not only the topic but the poem itself. Fascinating!

Lulekal ASSEFA, 10

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

AMAZING GRACE

If grace could be a colour,
It would be glimmering gold,
As bright as Heaven's gates.

If grace could be an animal,
It would be a cute, baby platypus,
Following its mum with enjoyment.

If grace could be a taste,
It would be my Mum's home-baked chocolate bread,
On a shivering, cold day.

If grace could be a smell,
It would be God's Heavenly breath,
Blowing life into Adam and Eve.

If grace could be a sound,
It would be a beautiful harp,
Like David in the Bible played for Saul.

If grace could be a feeling,
It would be forgiveness of our sins,
From Jesus Christ our Lord.

Judge's Comment

The poet of 'Amazing Grace' rarely strays from awareness of the attribute being described and in doing so has produced a very evocative poem.

Leeton BATES, 8

Wallsend Public
WALLSEND NSW

I Am

I am a good brother
I am Aboriginal
I am an Australian
I am a son
I am a singer
I am smart
I am silly
I am a good friend
I am Leeton

Judge's Comment

The poet has given a wonderful description of himself. Not what he looks like but who he really is on the inside - an honest poem, full of fun about a lovely boy. I like the alliteration too. Well done Leeton.

Daniel DUAN, 9

Sutherland Public School
SUTHERLAND NSW

The Garden

Flowers are growing,
mother nature is calling,
the garden has grace.

Judge's Comment

There is something about the simplicity of this poem, as though Mother Nature has indeed called to catch the poet's eye, which makes this poem speak to the reader. The final line is very astute for a young writer.

Hannah BLACKWELL, 8

*Ivanhoe Grammar - Plenty Campus
MERNDA VIC*

Wherever The Wind Blows

The wind blows the trees
Down float the leaves
Tossing the leaves up and down
Lightly landing on my head like a crown
Crunch! Crunch! They're up to my knees
Free to stomp as much as I please
The wind blowing the leaves away
They are making a mess and then we can play
It blows gently on my face
Or roughly blowing the umbrellas away
The wind carries the leaves to a great height
Far, far, far away, well out of sight
Wait, wait, for me
I'm coming! I want to be free
Like the wind

Judge's Comment

The poet has made a good attempt at unforced rhyme in this poem which creates a great sense of fun, play and freedom.

Anthony GUIRGUIS, 10

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

PEACE AND HOPE

We all fight for it
We hesitate for it
We dance in joy for it
We think of it
We pay for it
We jump to it
We sit on it
We wonder at it
We deny it
We accept it
We've got to have more of it
We feed it
We run to it
We act upon it
We attack it
We turn it
We love it
God gave it
Pray for it

Peace

Judge's Comment

This poem makes the reader think of the lengths we go to achieve peace.

Rachael JONES, 12

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

SNEAKY CROCODILE

Eyes on the target,
He watches his prey,
The element of surprise,
Is how he will play.

When it moves,
He follows it too,
Gliding along,

To the beat of his heart.
Speeding like a V8 cart,
Making sure he gets
An extra start.

Judge's Comment

There is a nice balance in the form of this poem. The rhyme in the first and the last stanza mirror one another, while the shortened middle stanza pulls the reader up and gives an element of suspense.

Jose MARCHANT, 13

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

THE WILD HORSE

The wild horse,
As fast as lightning,
My heart beats with joy
Every time I see him,
The wild horse, my wild heart,
Never stops running.

Judge's Comment

There is wonderful imagery in this poem and I particularly enjoy the relationship between the horse and the heart, the beating, the wildness and the running.

Zohaib KHAN, 9

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

THE FORCE

It's tough,
It's rough,
Rustling leaves,
Breaking trees,
Tearing houses.
It's peaceful,
It's gentle,
Cool face,
Rippling water,
Refreshing me.

Judge's Comment

The use of assonance in the early lines of this poem is very pleasing.

Jason LEE, 11

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

BLINDNESS

Darkness all around you.
Can't find a light,
Lost hope,
Lost desire.
Unending maze,
Unending nightmare,
Unbelievable truth.
Lost everything,
Sorrow fills the air.
There's no exit,
Unending escape,
Miserable soul,
Wandering around,
Lonely,
Left out.
Hungry for colour.
Hungry for light.

Judge's Comment

This is an emotive poem in which the poet conveys a sense of frustration, loss and despair felt by a sightless person, however it could equally be interpreted to be about darkness of the spirit or soul. The final two lines brilliantly convey the desire of the afflicted person.

Dylan PARKER, 7

*Ivanhoe Grammar - Plenty Campus
MERNDA VIC*

Wherever The Wind Blows

The wind is an invisible spirit

It can be whispering and soft like a breeze

It can be raging and rough like a hurricane

It moves the leaves around the ground

Crackling, hugging or violent

Cold and blustery

Storming and biting

Gentle and warm

Sometimes burning

The wind

Judge's Comment

The metaphor in the first line is excellent and together with the adjectives describing the various attributes of the wind contribute to make this a very good poem.

Jackson WELSH, 9

*Central Coast Grammar School
ERINA HEIGHTS NSW*

At Home

I see Shoes flying off the back porch
I hear chairs screeching across the deck
I smell danger outside
I feel fear touching my hand
I can taste lightening touching my tongue
I love this storm and I feel alive!
At Home

Judge's Comment

This poem is written in a very interesting way. The first five lines make the reader feel uncomfortable, perhaps even afraid of the effects of the storm. I particularly like the way the poet has told us how each of the five senses is affected. The sixth line, '*I love this storm and I feel alive!*' is a total surprise because it is so unexpected.

The final line is only two words. But with these two very telling words the poet has cleverly explained the reason he feels unafraid.

Junior Secondary

Lotte BECKETT, 13

*MLC School
BURWOOD NSW*

Pondering

the train was late again
so i sat and pondered life for a while
thinking about what my life could be like
and what people i could meet
and what books i could read
and as i got on the train
i felt a sense of curiosity id never felt before

i hope the train comes late again

Judge's Comment

A short, simple poem which says a lot in just a few lines. The decision to use no capital letters or punctuation is an effective one, and the repeated phrase of the first and last lines is clever. A poem which encourages readers to seize moments to pause and contemplate.

Niamh BELLICANTA, 13

*Hunter School Of The Performing Arts
BROADMEADOW NSW*

Luminous

Swirling specks of dust
catch in rays of morning light
that flood through the blinds,
capturing that perfect moment when,
sometimes, you get a taste of another life
where everything is different.
A life where the cold bites your face
and the light dazzles your eyes.
A life where the black sky explodes,
splattering stars across the sky
like paint on a canvas.

Judge's Comment

A lovely little image painted in a few short lines. The poet's thoughts explode like the glistening dust and stars of her words, drawing an everyday image – sunlight through the blinds – and making it extraordinary with a parallel to fireworks and a mention of other lives.

Christian CHAREAS, 14

*ST PATRICKS COLLEGE
SUTHERLAND NSW*

Early in the morning

Early in the morning
Sunlight creeps over the land
Young animals sprout to life
Begin the morning work
While the ground is still cold

Early in the morning
Roosters croak at dawn
Nourished cows grazing
Seeds sewn in the half-light
A profit to be made
Early in the morning
Busy, buzzing streets
roaring with impatience
poisonous smoke surrounding
Late for work again

Judge's Comment

A clever poem of contrasts, drawn between the waking of the natural world, the busyness of agriculture, and the bustle of the city. The poet cleverly avoids overanalysing, simply presenting the three images and letting us draw our own conclusions.

Olivia CHEN, 12

*Hornsby Girls High School
HORNSBY NSW*

Falling, Flying

Falling.

Air rushing past my ears.

A blur of colours in my sight.

Dropping to the face of the earth.

Eyes dry, mouth closed.

Racing against the breath of time.

Then stop.

Rewind.

Up, up into the sky.

Up, past the skyscrapers.

Up, past the clouds.

Not falling.

Flying.

Judge's Comment

A breathtaking poem with its contrast between falling and flying, and its reversal in the middle. There is much for the reader to contemplate about what is happening here – is this a poem of the magic of rewind, of salvation, or a sadder tale where the rewind signals a release from whatever made the person fall in the first place?

Jasmine DOOLEY, 14

*ACADEMY OF MARY IMMACULATE
FITZROY VIC*

Henry's Six Wives

Love.
I was in
His heart
For many years.
I thought until the end,
But now
He loves,
My friend.
Innocence.
I do not know
Why he wants
My death,
But forevermore
They shall not know
The truth.
Joy.
He truly loves me.
He says I bring him joy.
But now I must leave
And I shall
Never return.
Beauty.
Many girls have it.
I obviously do not.
He dearly loved my picture,
But he does not love
Me.
Treason.
"Traitor!" they cry
As I step onto
The scaffold
To end my life.
Who knew
That what brought
Me here was
Love?
Freedom.
He is gone
And I can live freely
Until my time
Comes.

Judge's Comment

I love the way this poem captures the story of each wife in just a few lines, juxtaposing but also creating a cumulative awareness of their tales. An intriguing way to capture this historical event.

Claire EVANS, 14

*St Joseph's College
BANORA POINT NSW*

And Nobody Cared

She sat there.
Her eyes flowed like oceans,
the wind chuckled
And nobody cared.

She sat there.
Her hair flapped in the wind like ribbon,
the leaves crackled
And nobody cared.

She sat there.
Her umbrella floated like a cloud,
the bench squeaked
And nobody cared.

She sat there.
Her dress scrunched like paper,
the rain thumped
And nobody cared.

She sat there.
Her skin like a ghost's,
the sun disappeared
And nobody cared.

She sat there.
Her heart fell like rocks,
the colours faded
And nobody cared.

She sat there.
And nobody looked
And nobody heard
And nobody cared.

Judge's Comment

This is a very sad poem, with the refrain and the rhythm remanent of a bell's mournful toll perfectly capturing the sorrow of the girl and the poet/observer who, it seems, cares.

George FINLAYSON, 14

*The Scots College
KANGAROO VALLEY NSW*

Manyana*

I love this place
I love the breaking of the clean, crisp waves onto the reef
And the green trees on the island
And the fish swimming aimlessly
Eyes darting, tail swerving
And the seaweed
Engulfing the reef
Brown, green, spiky, soft
Trying to attach themselves to our leg ropes
While we paddle out through the drifting current.
I spent most of my holidays here
Surfing on various boards I'd borrowed
From local friends and family
With young Will Regan
Slowly riding bikes to the store
Eating hot chips
And buying a backpack worth of lollies
I eat all the leftovers
Until my belly is full
I can eat
I can surf
I know all about this place
I have all I need here
In the people and places
Of Manyana
My favourite place.

Judge's Comment

The poet has used Steven Herrick's poem as a template here, to great effect. The structure echoes the original, but the poet has made it his own, to paint a picture of his own special place, and the memories it holds for him. Lovely.

Ayrton GILBERT, 13

Kincumber High School
KINCUMBER NSW

The Avoca Sea Breeze

Whitewash tickling my nose
Salt stuck in my hair,
The sand between my toes
And the Avoca sea breeze...

Children running in for a dip,
Dogs scrambling on the sandy shore,
Seagulls squawking for a chip
And the Avoca sea breeze...

Frisbees flown across dry land,
Beach cricket behind everyone,
Old ones baking on hot sand
And the Avoca sea breeze...

Life savers on patrol,
Board training to the north,
A sausage sizzle in a bowl
And the Avoca sea breeze...

My friends splashing water,
The waves eating seaweed
My Mum talking with her daughter
And, the Avoca sea breeze.

Judge's Comment

What a beautiful word-picture this poem creates, taking the reader to the beach and evoking the sights and smells so well. The use of the refrain is very effective.

Sabrina GILLETT, 13

*Orana Steiner School
WESTON CREEK ACT*

Giraffes

Look high
Towards the clouds
Can you see my grand head?
My famous coat on my body?
It's there.

I'm walking next to you
You feel invisible.
I'm eating high leaves on treetops
You feel beaten.
I'm licking my coat
You feel dirty.

I see the whole land
I stand tall and luminous
My neck trying to stay grand
I see the whole land
My neck feeling like sand
I may be able to see Venus
I see the whole land
I stand tall and luminous.

Judge's Comment

A clever poem taking us high into the viewpoint of a giraffe, gazing down at people below and feeling superior. The use of repeated words, phrases and whole lines is effective.

Amelia HOSIE, 13

*Ravenswood School For Girls
GORDON NSW*

Phantom of the Mountains

Far down by Kosciuszko, where menacing mountains soar
Above misty tree-clad valleys far below
Where the frosty breath of winter whips the slopes with bitter hands
And the summits sparkle bright with brilliant snow.
In this world of frozen wonders, hidden in the ghostly trees,
Striding proudly, with a brave courageous heart,
Resides a well-worn traveller, yet with spirit of a youth
Skips and prances, where the sunlight meets the dark.
A lonely silhouette, illuminated through the trees
But blink, and he will swiftly disappear,
Blending into speckled shadows, like a mesmerising shade
He vanishes into thin and frozen air
The phantom of the mountains, a legend of his time,
A story neither true nor fantasy
For no man has ever seen him, as he never leaves a print
Or a tell tale of his path through ancient trees
And on occasion, when he breaks out to the stony barren plains
Split straight apart by jagged mountains steep
His mane, a silken spread upon his velvet ivory side
Transforms into a wild gushing sweep
Like an alabaster river flowing though the frigid peaks
It crests behind him like a fearsome waterfall,
And the phantom of the mountains, with a coat of pearly white
Sprints faster than the wind through ruthless cold
And as the sun sets over mountain tops, calling in another day
And the songbirds lay to rest their cheerful songs
On a far and distant mountain rears a snowy stallion
Then, with the swelling shadows, he is gone.

Judge's Comment

A lovely attempt at the ballad form, conjuring a beautiful image of a ghostly brumby. I enjoyed the surprise of realising this traveller was not human, with his truth gradually revealed.

Julia JACOBSON, 13

*Moriah College
BONDI JUNCTION NSW*

The Girl Who Wasn't Hungry

For breakfast she's not hungry,
for lunch she had a late breakfast
and for dinner she was too full from the day.
This goes on for days,
to weeks,
to months,
and on,
until the wind could blow her away.
No one seems to notice,
or care at all.
Until one day she drops,
falls.
Suddenly it's all,
When did this happen?
When it had been happening all along.
Now all that's left,
in a shell of a once bright girl,
is bone
strings attached to her arms,
and cruel thoughts that follow her
all
day
long.

Judge's Comment

A stark poem, making good use of sparse images and varied line length to convey the very sad, but important, topic.

Francesca KENNEALLY, 14

*Northcote High School
NORTHCOTE VIC*

A Poem For The Emotionless

From the moment we are born,
we are told that emotion is natural.
Crying isn't weak,
anger isn't unnatural,
happiness isn't hard.

But my feelings are my own,
including the lack thereof.

So when I don't cry
at an animated characters death,
or the bombs that fall every minute
I'm not heartless.

And when I'm not outraged
by the injustices
a million miles away,
or even the ones that affect me in every respect,
I'm not stone cold.

and when I see a void,
an endless white,
an expansive nothing,
when I think of my future,
I'm not depressed.

Because in that void,
there's a small light
burning so bright it blinds all else.

The light goes away,
the light gets masked,
the light gets forgotten.

But it's there.

Always.

so remember,
just because I'm emotionless,
doesn't mean I don't feel.

Judge's Comment

An intriguing poem which takes the reader into the mind of someone who is apparently emotionless, providing a fascinating insight.

Benjamin KNOWLES, 12

*The Kilmore International School
KILMORE VIC*

Dragon

Flapping my wings, I feel myself rise.
I am majestic, a beast of the skies.
There has never been treasure as great as my scales,
As bright as diamonds, as tough as nails.
I'm fearsome, I'm deadly, the force of the night,
When my prey see me, they're stricken with fright.
I glide through the air, I twirl, I soar,
I'm the greatest of all, hear me roar.

Judge's Comment

Lovely use of rhyme, rhythm and poetic techniques such as simile to paint a joyful portrait of this fantastic creature.

Lauren LANCASTER, 12

*Hornsby Girls High School
HORNSBY NSW*

Empty Money

Packets of death swapping hands
For empty money

A childish dare
A sideways grin
A tilt of the head
Throat burning
Never ending ecstasy

Her skin grey
Her cheeks sunken
Her lips white
Her eyes empty
White slips through her fingers

So too does her life

Judge's Comment

A deceptively simple poem, describing a chilling reality. The final line sent a shiver down my spine. Very effective.

Anna LANGFORD, 15

*Northcote High School
NORTHCOTE VIC*

Last Letters

I open
My rusted old letterbox
Fingers close around
Creamy white envelope
On the back, inky Japanese characters
Stain the paper like pressed grasshoppers
Who in this modern world would take the time
To choose pretty patterned papers
Write slowly, carefully
In beautiful handwriting
Put it in an envelope, select a special stamp
Write my home address, not my email address.
Tie it to a red balloon
it sails across oceans, halfway around the world.
Postie collects it
Hops on her bike
Peddle, peddle
Delivering my letter, just for me
It could be simpler
A typed message, mouse click, 'send'
But so many people
Have put in effort
Just to get this letter to me
I smile.

Judge's Comment

A magic look at the contrast between postal mail and email. The exotic touch of the added twist of the letter travelling not by airplane, but tied to a balloon, and the Japanese lettering, add to the feeling of the letter as a treasure.

Jacinthe LAU, 12

Willoughby Girls High School
WILLOUGHBY NSW

I am

I am a flower that opens wide
I am a bee, hiding inside
I am the aftermath of a storm
I am a rose, tossed and torn
I am a clover, a little charm
I am the sea, soft and calm
I am a caterpillar, in a cocoon
I am a butterfly, coming soon

Judge's Comment

Clever use of anaphora (repetition), rhyme and rhythm make this a joyful poem. The promise of the final 'coming soon' is lovely.

Dearne LEE, 13

*Hornsby Girls High School
HORNSBY NSW*

Where the Wind Blows

I wanted to be a bird when I was born
Fly by all means said my dreams
Once, my sister dropped me
And unprepared
I fluttered flat into the basket
A fine landing.
Yet
Fly by all means said my dreams
My fingers do fly on the piano
And fly on the trumpet
And fly with the pen and pencil,
So do my feet.
Fly by all means said my dreams
Running hard across the ground,
Air sucked from my lungs
Legs kicking, twisting, hurting
Ankles bruised and sore
But I am fine
With a bit of ice.
It helps my wings grow.

Judge's Comment

A beautiful interpretation of what it means to fly, with a lovely series of images of the protagonist 'flying'. The last line is very clever.

Aljoscha MARCUZZI, 14

*Blackburn High School
BLACKBURN VIC*

My Ocean (Mother Nature Speaks)

The oceans curdle.
Loudly the sea roars in -
Quiet my child.

Judge's Comment

Lovely use of the haiku form. The image of the sea 'curdling' is particularly effective.

Tessa MILLS, 15

*Orana Steiner School
WESTON CREEK ACT*

Landscape

A languid red sky, smeared with dirt.
The ground below is honey smooth rust
and bittersweet shrubberies.
The blushing rocks moan, cracked and crumbling.
Velvet decay perfumes the air,
and Death is sticky on the horizon.

Judge's Comment

A poem of contrasts, with the beauty of velvet, honey and blushes contrasted with the bittersweet of dust, rust and decay and the final chilling line.

Joanna LOUDON, 12

*St Andrews Lutheran College
TALLEBUDGERA QLD*

In the Army

Cold, hard armour
Bangs together
Guns and swords
Encased in leather

Metal boots
Thudding past
Horses gallop
Lightning fast

Cannons fire
And men crouch down
Cover their bodies
With green and brown

Scars are left
Tears are shed
A constant memory
Of the men now dead

Judge's Comment

The rhythm of this poem has echoes of a battlefield march. In a relatively few words, the poet captures the movement, mayhem and sadness of battlefields past and present.

Katherine MISKIN, 14

*Merewether High School
BROADMEADOW NSW*

Lighthouse

When the gravestone grey waters
swirl with an evil menace
and crash against the hulls of creaking, wooden ships
you will guide the way to safety
lighthouse.

And the wind whips up in a fury
battering against the portholes
crying out eerily with the voice of tortured mermaids
you will show the way to shore
lighthouse.

When the sodden flags crack
against the dripping masts
and the ropes swell with the seawater
you will guide the way to safety
lighthouse.

When the sky cracks and fizzles
bearing down upon the tiny, toy-like ships
and a shot of lightening crackles across the clouds
you will show the way to shore
lighthouse.

And as the timbers creak and warp
against their rusty nails
and the Captain orders everyone up onto deck
you will guide the way to safety
lighthouse.

And when the ship reaches the seething rock-cliffs
and the foaming water launches itself against impenetrable land
and the ship loses its course
you will show the way to shore
lighthouse.

And when the captain throws up his hands
in defeat, and the crew members risk their luck
with the churning water, and the ship spins out of control
you will guide the way to safety
lighthouse.

After the storm, when the water is calm
and all that can be seen of the damage
are planks of timber tossing on the sea
you will sit there, serene
lighthouse.

Judge's Comment

A clever use of repetition to reinforce the solid, looming presence of the lighthouse against the chaos of a violent storm and scenes of a shipwreck in progress.

Lauren SCHRIEBER, 13

*Blackburn High School
BLACKBURN VIC*

Ocean Breeze

Salty air, sun kissed hair
Palm trees, ocean breeze

Surfing waves, sandy caves
Beach huts, sexy butts

Coconuts fall, crabs crawl
Water so clear, fish swim near

Sun sets, volleyball nets
Beach shells, seaweed smells

Fish'n'chips, salty lips
Sailing ships, watermelon pips

I loved today. I want to stay.

Judge's Comment

Intriguing, effective use of rhyme and rhythm to recreate a day at the beach. The poet has chosen to keep it simple, using sights and smells which will typify a beach scene for many readers.

Hugo SCHULZ, 14

*Blackburn High School
BLACKBURN VIC*

Skate Snake

Skating is fun,
Skating is sick, until
You get snaked by that one little prick,
On a scooter.

Judge's Comment

Short and to the point, this one made me laugh.

Jasmine TODOROSKA, 13

*MLC School
BURWOOD NSW*

Lies

When the rainbow erupts in the sky
You smile and ask if I can see it too
When I look back and say I can
You know I'm lying as all I see in the sunset is another day gone

When the watery lamp of the sky begins to glow
You smile and ask if I can see it too
When I look back and say I can
You know I'm lying as all I see is the moon never being as warm as the sun

When the warriors of the sky stand still
You smile and ask if I can see them too
When I look back and say I can
You know I'm lying as all I see in the clouds is rain

When giant's tears fall to earth
You smile and ask if I can see them too
When I look back and say I can
You know I'm lying as all I see is my wet washing

When the oasis from a sandy wasteland rises
You smile and ask if I can see it too
When I look back and say I can
You know I'm lying as all I see in the sea is the seaweed

When the motion of time chimes through the world
You smile and ask if I can hear it too
When I look back and say I can
You know I'm lying as all I see in the wind is my lost balloon

When the dancers of the light begin their show
You smile and ask if I can see it too
When I look back and say I can
You know I'm lying as all I see is fire is the smoke on my clothes
the next morning

When you look at me and see all the things that make me human
You smile and ask if I can see it too
When I look back and say I can
You know I'm lying as all I see in me is the flaws that break
everything apart

Judge's Comment

This is a really sad poem, contrasting the wonder seen by 'you', the subject of the poem, and the melancholy felt by the narrator. The construction is clever.

Kane TREMBLAY, 12

Yankalilla Area School
YANKALILLA SA

Dead Man Down

We drove past the red and white body,
It was as cold and lifeless as the mountains in the background.
I watched it as we went past and a cold chill ran down my back.
The light from the cops car flashing on my face,
The man's car smoking in the background.

Judge's Comment

Short and to the point, the length of the poem echoes the brief glimpse the narrator has of the scene she describes. The use of colour and light adds to the effect of the chilling glimpse.

Fela TREVOR-MCCARTHY, 15

*Northcote High School
NORTHCOTE VIC*

The Worlds Perfect Man

The World's perfect man
Is the man with no eyes
No mouth
Whose soul burns in the fire
Of deception.

The man who would die
To save the freedom
He never really had.

Who has been told from birth
It was his right
To live freely
Without deception
From those
Who promised him
Freedom.

Judge's Comment

There is a lot going on in this little poem, with the reader forced to think about why a man with no vision, no voice, and the willingness to die for an unattainable freedom is the perfect man. Perfect for who?

Swaetha VASUDEVAN, Jessica HUA, Carol TRAN

*Sydney Secondary College
LEICHHARDT NSW*

Dear Corner Table

Dear corner table
I feel like I have been shot
Each time we collide

Judge's Comment

Clever use of the haiku/serynu form. I love the surprising simile.

Michelle WANG, 13

*MLC School
BURWOOD NSW*

On the Dangers of Mass Media

Just close your eyes, they say
It'll be fun, they say
Several billion eyes closed that night
But not a pair opened the next day

Judge's Comment

A surprising poem, cleverly using just a few lines to provoke a lot of thought.



The Menagerie

Five o'clock in a diluted Fall afternoon;
She'd shuttered the entry to non-existent visitors
And made her nest in crumpled sheets
On a threadbare fawn sofa.
Light suffused through beehived glass
The windows were rust-stained—
The cleaner? He died years ago
She'd gone solo, the single tender of this ungodly shrine.

And she dreamed,
Conjuring odd notions
Of immortality.

The menagerie was small—
Only but a few yards
Big enough for muffled sunlight, musty air,
Events left better unspoken.
On a shelf she kept her jars
And in her jars she kept her children.

An eagle's embryo, bead-eyed
Shrunken-winged and pin-feathered
Suspended in a cruel mockery of flight.

A newborn cat, size of a forefinger
Died as it lived—in a second
In a day she preserved it in formaldehyde

A kangaroo's foetus. Jellybean
Marsupial that it was, or would have been
If it had found its way to the pouch

But in her largest jar, she kept her favourite
Parents weren't supposed to have favourites,
But she only had one. What could she do?
But nurture that vestigial son for forty years,
And then nurture him still.

A son who'd shared her blood and flesh
For seven months, and then
Wanted out, bloody

Lungs too weak to cry
Eyes too small to see
Fingers too short to grasp
Heart too still to beat.

Judge's Comment

This is quite a shocking poem – which is a sign of its effectiveness. The poet conjures an image of this frightening, disturbing place, with the final sad, unsettling image, one the reader finds hard to put aside.

Carter WARD, 13

*Maitland Christian School
EAST MAITLAND NSW*

Forever

Forever we remain oblivious to the future,
lost to the past and enduring our torture.
Forever we take chances to settle our scores,
losing some battles and winning some wars.
Forever.....

Judge's Comment

A thought-provoking little poem. The final line leaves us hanging, effectively evoking the feeling of forever being unrelentless.

Senior Secondary

Morgaine AUTON, 16

*Mountain Creek State High School
MOOLOOLABA QLD*

Carnival

Stay a moment longer in this day, this cacophony of sound
And maybe then you'll see the beauty when the carnival abounds
These laughing laughing faces call you out above the din
Their happiness contagious, their smiles invite you in.

Beckoning you forward, the performers take the stage
In a ritual of movement they command you for an age
Within the circle of the light you join the great parade
As they guide you to the forest, this expectant cavalcade

The bright colours of the lanterns serve to guide you through the
night
The festivities continue in this carnival of light.
Dancers flicker in and out to sprint amongst the trees
Their quick hypnotic movements are a spectacle to see.

It feels as if it's magic, nothing real could be like this
The night's cold air can't take you when you dance among the mist
The world is spinning quickly, the world is spinning slow
The peals of laughter echo through the woodland as you go

Such an altruistic statement in the victory of giving
To celebrate it properly, to live life for the living
To live within the moment this carnival rejoices
And the forest feels quite open in the choir of the voices

The loudness hits a breaking point, you watch as time goes by
A literal explosion against the navy of the sky
The day will come when this carnival has left and gone so far
But you can still recall them as they dance amongst the stars.

Judge's Comment

Clever use of rhyme and rhythm to share the feeling of a magical carnival.



Nothing Speaks

Stains in the concrete
From where the nails had been
And aged, creating a colour not quite brown
And there's that pale green
From the lichen
Which grows over everything
It makes the house look empty
And the old swing
On the back porch
Which hasn't been used for years
It would probably break anyway
You can't get anywhere near it
Because the mulberry bushes
Have overgrown the path
Where the children used to play hopscotch
And how they'd laugh
When they missed a square
Or tripped over and fell on the ground
Which is now covered with leaves
And there is no sound
Echoing through this lifeless place
The gate still creaks
When pushed open on rusting hinges
But nothing speaks.

Judge's Comment

A beautiful description of an abandoned house which, though empty, still echoes with the past.

Marney ANDERSON, 16

*Applecross Senior High School
ARDROSS WA*

Widow Speak

rough hands
fold me in half
and again once more
he lays me aside
unmoving, growing old

a rigid shell
set stale, eroding
I fall like salty crumbs
and lie imprisoned
'tween his palms

he presses them closed
folding me in half
and again once more
yet I am not for him
to fold

Judge's Comment

From its title to its final, brilliant last lines, this is a poem which invites the reader to witness, to wonder and to the narrator to find the courage those final lines indicate she possesses.

Madeline BAILEY, 16

*Hobart College
MOUNT NELSON TAS*

An Orchestra of Selves

The separate figures crowding vivid streets
Are each alone and yet as one unite
Like intertwining thoughts on lucid nights
That dance amidst the folds of patterned sleep

They form an incandescent city maze
That breathes with tides of movement through its roads
And bodies draped in many-coloured clothes -
These scattered people lost in unique ways

In this collage of tangled loves, and times
When lovers must regress to strangers now:
The mundane tunes of different lives align
In some accord so subtle though divine
They are but fleeting rhythms – yet somehow
Eternal in their transient design

Judge's Comment

Excellent use of the sonnet form to explore the apparent contradiction in so many people being alone together.

Darcy BANKS, 15

*Applecross Senior High School
ARDROSS WA*

Toy Girl

Moisture upon face
Laughter, darkness, all one
Shapes reaching out

Booming, echoing voices
Face out of focus
Lifting with arms

More voices, swirling through dark
Park changed to kitchen
Hard electric light

Nothing she could do
Arms reaching, taking greedily
Hard light dimming, slipping away...

Waking, wishing for sleep
Unbearable pounding, head-splitting
Strange odour, paint like

Eyes, burning sockets
Opened, tentatively
Scene, devastatingly bright

Recoil, carnage obvious
Walls ran red, splashes of paint,
Jagged tears, wallpaper destroyed

Pounding, throbbing increased
Tornado seemed to tear through
Wine stains, shattered crockery

House unfamiliar
What had they done?
Sickening scent of vomit

Source was found
But sounds of tyres on gravel
Key scraping in lock

She curled, foetally
Picked up a piece of torn paper
Remnants of a birthday invite

Judge's Comment

A clever poem about the aftermath of a party gone wrong. The poet makes excellent use of short sharp lines and stanzas to create both the whirl of the party and the hangover of the next morning.

Liam DIVINEY, 17

*Hunter School Of The Performing Arts
BROADMEADOW NSW*

Tomorrow They'll Be Lions

The gentle breeze rakes the eyes
from thunderous sticks that snap with fire.
Children walk to war today
tomorrow they'll be dyin'.

The wind at their back as they walk away
to a place no one will find them.
The graves they dig themselves today
tomorrow they'll be missin'.

Through the clouds of gods they dive
on a gale-force they're gliding.
Though they crash and burn today
tomorrow they'll be flyin

Wherever there is wind there's change
and men will keep on 'dyin'.
And boys who died as sheep today
tomorrow they'll be Lions

Judge's Comment

A well written attempt to capture both the horror of war and the effect it has on those forced to fight it.

Violet BRETT, 17

Hawker College
HAWKER ACT

Three poems in response to 'Othello': Iago

"Look on the tragic loading
Of this bed," he says.

And you look,
And you see.

You see your wife,
And your commander,
And *his* wife.
All dead.
And all because of you.

You think, vaguely, that
You should feel some regret.
You're not even sure if there *was* a time
When you would have fallen,
In wretchedness and misery,
At the death of any single one
Of these people.

There's a lingering inclination,
'*Don't you care?*'
That won't be allowed
To escape your mind.

How did this happen?
When did you stop caring?
It wasn't, really, a conscious thing
It started because you were
Bored
You wondered if you
Could
Achieve this sort of...
Mastery of the mind,
Manipulation of the
Miserable fools
Who fell so *easily*...

You weren't ever
Really
Intending to go through with it.

But they gave you so many excuses –
Made you ancient, when you deserved
Lieutenant.
Slept with your wife.
And there was the fool,
in love with
The *perfect girl*.

It was all so *easy*.

But your mastery was...
Incomplete,
Or so it seems.
Because,
"Look on the tragic loading
Of this bed..."

You realise it was your wife.
It was her fault
That you failed.
You are glad that she is dead.
She cannot corrupt your future plans.

What of your future, though?
Now that your wife has
Ruined everything...
What future?

Maybe there is a way...
And your mind is off,
Without your permission,
Engaged in the making of plans
That will earn you your freedom.

Judge's Comment

A clever response to the story of Othello, exploring Iago's role and inner workings.

Charlotte BURGESS, 18

*Hobart College
MOUNT NELSON TAS*

Pockets

Yesterday afternoon,
smelling of hard work and dust,
we smoked a cigarette in your car,
until we were young again, beautiful.
(Earth and sun in our pockets).

Yesterday afternoon,
heavy with briefcases and bills,
we listened to ACDC on full volume
until we were young again, immortal.
(Moon and stars in our pockets).

Last afternoon,
skin contorted with age and sun,
we danced to the radio,
until we were young again, oblivious.
(Rainbows and snow in our pockets).

Last night,
hungry and tired and red-eyed,
we kissed each other,
until we were young again, first time.
(Thunder and hail in our pockets).

Judge's Comment

A clever look at recapturing youth, as a presumably middle aged couple dance with rebellion as they try to ignore bills and ageing.

Jasmine DUFF, 16

*Hunter School Of The Performing Arts
BROADMEADOW NSW*

The Fragile Nature of Porcelain

The cracks spread
a spider web of shame
that make its way
over her porcelain skin.
She picks a scarf.
Black.
Wraps it around her head
to hide the blooms of shame
forming on her cheeks.
She sits on the bed.
The cracks spread
splintering her porcelain skin.
Each one pushed by a wave
of guilt.
Of shame.
Of hate.
A shaking breath.
A stop.
A start.
A tightening of her eyes,
a shivering of her heart.
A small white line
to ease the pain.
To smooth her skin
of porcelain.

Judge's Comment

A chilling but effective poem, with the porcelain of the girl's skin echoing the white of the powder and contrasting with the black of her scarf and the red of her cheeks.

Ricky HAM, 15

Pymble Ladies' College
PYMBLE NSW

The Grandfather Clock

Every morning, Amidst
the holy Silence,
Whilst the ardent blush of Dawn
kisses the virgin Sky, I am
awakened by the broken
creaks of floorboards And
the muffled rustle of
bed sheets, as Grandmama
prepares herself for yet another
Day.

As she heads towards
the Grandfather Clock, clothed
in a night-dress not unlike Blanche Dubois'
from *A Streetcar Named Desire*,
the shadows paint upon the
bleach-white walls
A woman, back straight
head poised
Each step placed, slow
but firm
As I watch, I am reminded of Grandmama's
especial haiku:

Concealed, secret spring
Ripe peach blossoms known to few
Hidden in plain sight

Opening the reflective
glass case, she reaches
behind the brass pendulum and
searches; finds
the Heart of the Clock
She winds it eight times and
waits for the mechanical,
throbbing
tick, tick, tick

Grandmama smiles; stills at the sound
Her clear eyes cloud and once again
she is a young girl, caught in the web of
a distant World; embraced in the arms of
a Someone, long gone, who
gave her the Clock as a reminder of his
undying affection

tick, tick, tick
Her eyes harden; lips pucker
She quickly closes the case, Careful
not to peer too closely into
the glass- see the Inescapable
Truth

The days are
Sand in an hourglass
The grandfather clock is repaired,
and refinished,
and repaired,
and refinished
But, for Grandmama
Another line etched into her
Leather skin,
Another moment taken to
Regain her breath,
Another pill to swallow her
back pain away

Grandmama
Her milky, omniscient eyes meet my own
brown, hesitant eyes, and she smiles
a small, sad
Smile

Every morning, in a
fragile time Now forgotten
by All - except one
The shadows paint upon the
cream walls
A woman, bent and twisted
by Reality, leaning despondently
into her cane

Opening the reflective
glass case, she reaches
behind the brass pendulum and
searches; finds
the Heart of the Clock
She winds it eight times and
waits.

Judge's Comment

A beautiful, melancholic poem of ageing, and the contrast between memories and reality. The watching grandchild is perceptive, taking the reader deep inside her observations with touches including the haiku and the shadows.

Sarah HARRIS, 17

*St Michael's Collegiate
HOBART TAS*

A Life Entwined

Trees are caught in your silver spin;
Fragile adorned jewels on a finger.
Windows are framed by your translucent web,
Winding its deadly stair,
Hanging in a moment.

Velvet-footed spider,
Running your chaotic races.
A bane to humanity,
Yet necessary nonetheless.

Capturing shadows from dewy nights,
Claw hooks attaching woven ply;
A gossamer silver silken thread;
Drops of dew, twinkling like fragments of quartz.
Iridescent kaleidoscope,
In the morning dawn.
Effortlessly beautiful,
Yet complex.
An unnoticed work of art,
Fashioned until faultless.

Into the web they fall,
Not knowing their fate.
Such a grand way to die,
Bound with exquisite silk.
Leaving ghosts of insects,
Trapped forever floating
Spider webs turn to cobwebs
Dusty remains of a life past.
Looking at your web, sweet spider,
Makes me think and ponder
Will my life end in tatters,
Or will it be a masterpiece?

A perchance to create, climb, fly
Or perchance to crumble, fade, die
Life hangs by a thread,
You, feared spider, know this best.

Judge's Comment

This artful poem explores not just the beauty of the spider and its web, but the parallels between the spider and its prey and the lessons which could be applied to human life. A clever comparison.

Bekka HILLAN, 16

*Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE SA*

Elderly Abandonment

She feels guilty in the morning
her garden cries for her
geranium on the window sill
bows its head.

'But I visited her last week!'
Furious whispers in a dead corridor
discarded by a needy world
and now she mourns.

The window is too far away
a postage stamp of sky
a helpful nurse ends her daydreams
with a curtain.

Judge's Comment

A gently sad poem - both telling a story of loss and providing a reminder of the importance of making time while we can. The images of the sad geranium, the dead corridor and the closing curtain are well chosen.

Sasha KRIEG, 16

*Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE SA*

Lazy Lizard

My dog is a lizard
seeking out the sun,
for an hour or two
he'll lay there,
the cement
of our garden desert
sizzling his scales.
He appears lazy
until a fly
catches his eye,
the effort
consumes him
and he lunges
at the imposter.

With no reward,
he slumps back down
to wait for another
reptilian dance.

Judge's Comment

What a clever metaphor, which will delight readers. The phrase 'reptilian dance' is perfect.

Emily SHAW, 16

*Individual Entry
EPPING NSW*

Promises

He left me alone
Leaving hollow promises
Drenched in tragic pain

Judge's Comment

A sad haiku/serynu about the pain of a broken heart.

Sarah LOVERIDGE, 15

*Winifred West Schools, Frensham
MITTAGONG NSW*

Poetry

Poetry is the first whispers of literature
The original method of pouring out thoughts
Experience being retold and memories sparkling with new life.

Fossils of the past and dreams of the future
Feelings and emotions that seep out from the cracks of our inner
self
And swim beneath the eyes of our audience.

The letters that transform words into art
The beat of music that keeps us sane
And the shades of colour that brighten our lives.

The devil and angel from within
As they finally break free and spill onto a page
Voices that speak to you in a way nothing else can.

Poetry explodes from your imagination and allows it to run wild.

Judge's Comment

A poem about poetry - how wonderful! An excellent example of the way a well crafted poem can say what otherwise is difficult to say.

Mikaela MILLER, 17

*Applecross Senior High School
ARDROSS WA*

Fishing

Upon the watery mirror,
Framed by rolling hills
Sits a little wooden jetty
Warn by half a century of feet
Empty but for one
Small child who,
One could say, lives on that jetty –
Fishing rod in hand,
Content
In his peaceful surroundings,
Waiting for a bite.

He is there,
At the crack of dawn
When the mist
Crawls across the mirror's surface,
And the first rays of light
Come creeping out
From behind the hills.

He is there
All through the day,
When the sun is beating down:
Hot and dry,
Or when the sky is a woolly blanket of grey,
With ceaseless rain
Dancing atop the water's surface.

He is there
With his rod at nightfall,
When the air is icy cold.
When the sounds of bush and forests
Echo through the night
And a million glowing eyes
Peer out from the darkness above.

Judge's Comment

A well crafted tale of a young fisherman, almost ghostly in his constant presence on the jetty. The repetition of 'he is there' and the structure of the last three stanzas stress his constancy whilst creating a charming picture.

Jotika PANTLING, 15

*St Paul's College
WALLA WALLA NSW*

Beauty Lost in the Wind

She's soft skin,
against clean sheets,
The perfect amount of pillows,
And just the right amount of heat.

She's the girl,
Who smells like the last breath of summer,
And tastes,
Like the first song of spring.

She can see colours,
bound within darkness,
And sing all the notes of the wind.

There's still sunshine in her eyes,
Where there's sadness in her heart.
And she could read you like a book,
From the ending,
To the start.

She's the lyrics in your head,
That just won't go away.
She's the child you are at heart,
And you wish that you could stay.

She's the flower in the pavement
And the picture on the wall,
It's sad though that you'll miss her,
As she walks down the school hall.

She's the smile without a reason,
And the hug without a cause.
She'll brighten your whole life,
Simply just,
Because.

Judge's Comment

A beautiful poem that is a song of celebration of a girl. The double mention of sadness hints at a touch of melancholy.

Hunt RHYS, 15

The Friends' School
NORTH HOBART TAS

Wherever the wind blows

Oh and how we had such fun
Playing in the light of a dying sun.

The sun is dead.
The moon is gone.
No books are read
No light is shone.

In our minds we are so free
Although in life we cannot be.

The luscious trees.
The fields of white.
They made us freeze
When we had sight.

I felt the wind upon my face
Of the wind there is no trace.

We are free now
A different free.
It's with our minds
That we can see.

We have no bounds
And with the breeze.
We meander through
The darkened trees.

Way up high
Far down below.
Our inner minds
We do not show.

As we drift through
The vicious storm.
The lightning cracks
We have no form.

The mountain pass
With no direction.
Open sky
Without protection

Judge's Comment

A haunting poem with suggestions of an afterlife, opening with a sense of fun but building to something more sinister.

Jehannah MAY, 15

Hornsby Girls High School
HORNSBY NSW

Stop

The rain falls.
Incessant.
Sporadic.
My heart beats.
Unceasing.
Steady.
Eventually
Both will stop.

Judge's Comment

An adept little poem, providing a deceptively simple comparison between rain and heartbeat, with the final line making us think about the ending signalled by that 'stop'.

Chloe SIOK PING KHENG, 15

*Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE SA*

Rain

I am the rain
collecting in clouds
pushing through
wanting to be free

I can be anything
tumbling down
delicate drizzle
moistening the air
fat full raindrops
splashing into puddles

I can be
sleek and fast
slicing across skin
as sharp as a knife
angled sideways
carefully colliding

I can decide
to turn to ice
jagged shards descend
smash to the ground.

Today I am the rain
that appears with the sun
smiling hand in hand
melting into one

Judge's Comment

Lovely use of imagery here to portray the different faces of the rain.
The use of first person is effective.



Pianissimo

My fingers lightly tap the keys
they dance and twirl
gently sway
dancers across the floor.

My hands arch and flatten
reach out to touch
cross over and under
carefully tiptoe past.

Notes fly through the air
as my hands create
whispered conversations
together, a song.

Judge's Comment

Lovely use of imagery to create a vivid picture of hands playing a complicated piano piece.

Michael TURVEY, 17

*Rosny College
Rosny TAS*

Flirtations with Morality

Genocides
Are not remembered
By the ones whose side did better
Wrongdoings are Rightdoings
Or never done's at all.
And this just brings the question
to the forehead of my forehead
Is the telling of the truth of more importance than morality?

Judge's Comment

A poem which challenges the reader to think about the morality of war and genocide. I love the phrase 'forehead of my forehead'.

Alecia SMITH, 15

*Applecross Senior High School
ARDROSS WA*

Dr Jekyll

Shut away inside my chambers,
Stagnant air made stuffy by hearth-fire
Over-cozy armchairs dispersed regularly, predictably,
Scattering the room with excess comfort as
Tea cooled and biscuits staled on trays,
The curtains; always shut,
Barring immoral influences from my existence

A life of severity unsatisfying to taste,
Tempted addicts, Hyde and I fought
To taste and erase the "liberating" brew,
I had to win; I didn't want to;
But to be lured, even slightly, was to fall.
Time obliterating praise of conscience
The drawer was opened, drug taken,
I lost the battle; I won the battle:
Wrenching into my second self
Losing hold of the original

A bright moon glowed beyond those curtains,
The night cloudless, sky unblemished
Cold but crisply clear, bar one:
Hyde and I, clouding the perfections
Every uneven tread on pavement a stain,
Every exhalation polluting clear air
A deformity of soul, a sin to exist,
Self imprisoned inside my own body
Too weak to resist

Voluntarily stripped of balancing instincts,
Although even the worst of us can
Walk steadily among temptation,
A minor enticement can destroy such mental fragility
As that I owned,
Smiling and crying, gloriously quailing,
Revelling in the act of murder
Whilst moaning and cursing that depraved soul
Hidden within us all, by which I was punished
Through my own actions, and his, or ours,

To go to sleep as Dr Jekyll
And wake a body of evil, the spirit of hell,

Myself as Hyde,
A self-inflicted curse delivered by me, and him, and us:
Bound together, but repelling as polar twins
Until the devil reigns the pathos
And Jekyll is hidden forever!

Judge's Comment

A clever interpretation of the story of Jekyll and Hyde. The formality of the language and the first person voice help us to get inside the story.

Nicole YALLOP, 16

*Quakers Hill High School
QUAKERS HILL NSW*

Untitled

He burnt bright with passion,
lighting up the darkness of her life,
but he never knew that,
as they only crossed paths five times a year.

And she craved him,
like he did her.
Even though they had their highs and lows
they were together all the time.

And that evening,
the sun missed the moon,
whilst the waves kissed the shore.

Judge's Comment

A delightful little poem which initially seems to be a love story. Readers will love the surprise.

Ryan STREET, 17

*Hobart College
MOUNT NELSON TAS*

Slow Morning

Can you hear
the dull bronze morning?
It is hidden,
buried in the silence
of birds,
taken from the dusty shadows
of an open saloon
door.

Can you smell
the sun-drenched hammock,
your protection from
the leaf,
fluttering in the chilled wind.

Can you feel
the streaky
dry
paint,
plastered on wooden slats,
reminiscent of sea and tar.

Can you taste
the midday heat, inexorably
drawn to the
height of
blue.

Can you see
the baking
chocolate,
rising in muffin tops
and drenched in white milk.

Do you imagine the campfire
coals still
burning,
flickering,
silent from the vanished night.

Judge's Comment

A lovely collection of images which together evoke scenes of a camp site morning.

Claire WILSON, 16

*Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE SA*

Hyena

I slink through the veld
a master of disguise,
my cravings for meat take control
as I follow the scent
of my prey.

Up ahead, vultures circle
I know the kill is close
I fight the urge to laugh
at my luck
but creep stealthily.

Staying downwind,
the lions leave their carcass
so let the games begin.
Vultures dive, jackals sprint
all after the same prize.

Carefully I move closer
and claim my prize.
Concealed in the grass
I silence
my screaming belly.

Judge's Comment

A vivid portrait of the hunting movements of a hyena. The use of first person here is excellent.

Grace WILSON, 18

*Hobart College
MOUNT NELSON TAS*

Dementia

She sits, stiffly, on her old leather chair
And knits with fickle fingers that, machine-like, move;
Mute, she stares blankly at the ocean landscape
Encompassing our home.

I called on her once, when I was young,
Unaware of the confusion that consumed her;
Though she heard me, she would not answer.

I asked my father what was wrong
The day he walked her through the door,
Her arm slung over his broad shoulders.
She lived with us from that day on

Our house was lit with the warm orange glow of the setting sun,
And the birds sang softly from the trees,
Where hung dead leaves.

Even that could not lift the curtains from their faces,
Nor the emptiness reflected in their eyes
They had left together happy,
Now some parasite had worked its way inside,
A darkness I could not comprehend.

As I grow older now and wiser, she wastes away
Decaying; I think she knows
She nears the end.

Men in white coats come and go; they fill the room with sterile air
Bones strung together, parody what once was there.
A hollow trunk with broken roots,
She's severed now from all the branches of the tree

And part of me knows, I think,
That she was never really there.
She was lost to us the day she walked back through that door
And whispered softly in my ear,
'goodbye my darling, I'll see you sometime soon.'

Judge's Comment

A sad, well-wrought poem which explores the difficult topic of dementia in a very personal way.

Brendan B

*Youth Education Centre
CAVAN SA*

Love

I'm locked
You're my key
Promise to never set me free
I got you
You got me
We are whole
Soul meets soul
Let love
Take control

Judge's Comment

A clever little poem, a rap. Great use of rhyme and rhythm made me want to clap along.

Learning Assistance and Special Education Secondary

Ambaye AKELE, 12

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

FAST FOOTBALL

The kids pumped on what's planned
So much fun they're going to have
Ready or not.
First game ready,
The kids don't know what they're in for.
The first game starts and all you hear is 'go'.
The next thing you see is they're all foes
So competitive they are all.
Nothing and no one can stop them.

Kids falling down
Screaming
Laughing
You can imagine what's next.
Too funny to see some kids touching the ball.
Kids ready to play soccer.
I'm too jealous to watch
Thinking how lucky they are
They are playing soccer.
Me? I'm writing poetry!

Judge's Comment

This is clever. A poem about football that turns out, in the final line, to be about not playing football.



TSUNAMI

Humongous
big
eager people
strong
massive
nothing gets in its way
deadly
dangerous
that is what I can see.

Women weeping
children screaming
desperation of people
buildings crashing
loud waves
people dying
what's next ...
that's what I can hear.

Suffering is all I can taste.

Judge's Comment

A well crafted poem about the sensory overload of a tsunami. The poet manages to capture the chaos.

Katherine ALLEN, 14

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

The Chill of Autumn

Autumn is the season between summer and winter,
In the Polar Regions autumn is fleeting,
Out to surprise the chill of the cold air is bitter
Animals out looking for food their voices bleating.

The people of the Equator know little about cold,
Autumn does not seem to want to come,
Seasons change but no season is bold,
Autumn comes and soon is done.

Autumn in America is harvest time,
From September to November Autumn comes,
The days are warm and the nights sublime,
The days become chillier and frosts the land loves.

By Autumn's end lakes and streams begin to freeze,
Birds fly south and snow storms start,
North Hemisphere winds carry cold breeze,
The chill of Autumn continues until Spring gives the land heart.

Autumn chills people in the Southern World,
Coolness comes from March to early June,
The bottom half of the world with clouds in a swirl,
Listless cool landscapes desolate like the moon.

Leaves spend their lives on the trees,
Withering and dying they fall to the ground,
Trees leafless and bare whilst Autumn flees,
Spring comes along and life again abounds.

Judge's Comment

Some beautiful images here of autumn around the world. I love the line 'Listless cool landscapes desolate like the moon'.

Mert AKGUN, 13

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

MY DREAM

It all began
When I came in my bedroom
And had a little nap.

I am the richest child in the whole entire world,
What to do, what to do umm ...
Let me think ...
I can buy anything I want
Wait ...
I am going to do what I should have done
A long time ago
When I was rich.

I should give the money
to the poor
or to charity
Someone, somewhere, will learn to smile.

Judge's Comment

A simple poem with a lovely message.

Najma ALI, 15

*Roma Mitchell Secondary College
GEPPS CROSS SA*

* * *

I saw a young girl
With a gentle smile
Her eyes like pearls
With a strange style

So ghostly pale
Her clothes so tattered
Her body so frail
Her soul, shattered

She sat on my window
Then glanced outside
I stuffed my face into my pillow
Then felt something inside

She brought tears to my eye
I will always regret
No matter how much I deny
I can't ever forget

She sat next to me
"Mother, I'll see you in a while"
As I turn around to see
She stands on the window and smiles

She's gone
I stare at the sun
And I know what must be done
As I take out a gun

Laughter took over
I would finally be forgiven
I grew bolder
It was *my* decision

I pulled the trigger
Slowly I fell
It drew nearer
I could see hell

Judge's Comment

A well crafted, but very sad poem. Good control of rhyme and rhythm.

Hayden ANNETTS, 17

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

When the wind blows

When the wind blows
Kites fly in the sky
Bubbles float across the distant view
Trees move left and right

When the wind blows
The waves surge onto the beach
The sand blows along the shore
Leaving immense cliffs

When the wind blows
The clouds dance in the sky
And I wonder why
I can't fly

Judge's Comment

Lovely use of the contest theme. The repetition of the first line is effective.

Jason CHAN, 19

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

A Heart Attack

Since the disaster occurred
I have turned into a cat on a hot tin roof.
Almost all the time I was in pain
I was a bundle of nerves.

My dad was freed from his prison.
I'm as happy as a sandboy,
Like a man walking on air.
Not in a million years have I felt like this
The fact that my father was released from the nightmare.

Judge's Comment

An intriguing poem. The reader will be surprised with the contrast of a 'disaster' and the poet's feeling of being happy, until the final line which explains all. Lovely.

Melisa DENIZLI, 13

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

STARVATION

Have you ever wondered ...
How it felt to starve?
Half a cup of rice a day?
Water carried from three kilometres away?
Are YOU content and satisfied? Happy?

Parents make the most delicious dinner ever ...
"Nope, don't want that!"
Parents take you to world famous restaurants ...
"Nope, don't want that!"
Parents give you food every day ...
"Nope, don't want that!"

Children in Africa
Don't eat the food we eat
Don't drink the drinks we eat
Don't get chances to go places like we do.

Swollen bodies is the only thing you see,
The children in Africa have those bodies
They don't want to see.

Dear God, take care of the ones in need,
The ones starving, the ones dying ...

Judge's Comment

The use of questioning and speaking directly to the reader is effective in getting the message across here.

Shea DEVNIE, 15

*Parry School
TAMWORTH NSW*

I have a Dream

(inspired by MLK)

I don't have a dream, because nothing needs to change.

I don't have the power to change things.

I'm not a president or anything.

I don't have the leadership or anything.

I'm only 15, I can't come up with good speeches,

however today I made a change in my own life,

I took care of my wounds.

I am learning that every positive action is a change.

I could change the world if I was an inspirational person.

Can I change my world?

It depends if I'm smart enough or even brave enough.

This will happen when I make a stand.

Educating myself is me making a stand.

Maybe I do have a dream.

Judge's Comment

The surprise of the poet telling us she doesn't have a dream, and then taking us through her changing thought processes is effective.

Drake DIK, 17

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

Technology

Technology gives us innovation
Troubles the unintelligent
Tames the electronic world
Tells us how to make things
Teaches us new ideas and methods
Torches any competition possible
Trembles anything in its path
Tries to become something new
The industry has become powerful
Terrifies people in the end

Judge's Comment

A clever use of alliterative line beginnings to link the thoughts as they take us from innovation to terror.

Theophilus DIN, 14

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

WHEREVER THE WIND BLOWS

Wherever the wind blows
I can imagine, but will never really know.
I see a big tree,
Its branches now arching over me.
It is a tower, from the ground it stands tall.
When I am under it, I feel so very small.

I brought a kite with me today,
For I hope there would be some wind.
But to my dismay, there was not a trace.
Disappointed, I sat
A frown upon my face.

But a small leaf off the branch above my head just fell
And into my hand it landed ...

...It then blew away.
I knew then and there, that there was wind after all.
So I laid my kite out,
And the wind blew it with great power and great ease.
I then looked at the sun, fading away.
And I made a promise ...

...To come back again on a windy day.

Judge's Comment

Nice use of the theme. I love that it is something as small as a leaf which shifts the narrator's awareness.

Sam DOEPEL, 15

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

It's all Mathematics to me

I count the numbers
And each side has to match
I calculate, subtract and add the difference;
And still it doesn't work out.

Is it the same for you, I ask
Hoping the answer will be yes.
But he answers in the negative
Boy... am I in a mess.

You have to make sure the numbers add up.
He patiently tells me today.
That's all very well and good I say
But there is now way...no way...

That I can see how it is done
Even when I count on my thumbs;
Nothing makes me more irate
Than when I get seven, and it's meant to be eight!

I think it's time for me to declare
That numbers are truly not my friend.
I raise my arms in sheer despair
And angrily tear at my hair and declare -

It's all Mathematics to me!!

Judge's Comment

A well crafted poem about the frustration of maths. The irregular rhyme helps to emphasise the confusion.

Georgina FINDLEY, 14

*Wycliffe Christian School
BLAXLAND NSW*

The Day I Got Dunked

I feel the soft wind running through my hair as it blows,
I feel the grainy sand squishing between my toes,
I feel the cool, summer water swirling around my feet,
I feel the hot sun burning my back like a piece of meat.

I see the sand as golden as the sun,
I see the toddlers splashing having fun.
I see the water as it gleams and glitters,
I see a crab creep out slowly then in alarm it flitters.
I see colourful umbrellas, dotting the sand,
and sand dunes swept across the land.

I smell the salty breeze brushing against my face,
The delicious aroma of coconut cream wafts up in space,
I smell the pleasant aroma of a passerby
The putrid stench of rotting fish nearly makes me cry.

I hear the foamy waves crashing down the beach,
I hear the sea gulls squawking just beyond my reach.
I hear the wharf squeaking under a heavy boot
I hear a boats arrogant voice of a sudden toot.

I taste the salty sea water as it splashed me and sprung,
I taste my icecream melting as it warms on my tongue
The gritty sand was in between my teeth,
The day I got dunked at the wavy beach.

Judge's Comment

I like the way the poet makes the use of the five senses to recapture the highs and lows of a trip to the beach.

Sean MCKAY, 14

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

Wagging Tail

Mum, can I have a dog?

A dog you can love

Clean up after it

Feed it

Love it

Wash it

A dog you can love

Find all the things it chewed up

Cry over the garden that used to win awards

Bark all day and have neighbours knocking on our door

Chase the cars

A dog you can love

You'll love it Mum!

Mum, can I have a dog?

Judge's Comment

Any mother who has ever had a new dog will relate to this one.
Very clever.

Kaan GULASI, 12

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

THE QUEST FOR THE BOOK

The book of secrets
Knowledge
The book of power
Locked in a huge cube.

Only unlocked by taking the quest to the ancient temple cave
Facing danger on the edge of the earth
A dark ancient abandoned place
The key to the cube is the orb.

Creatures guarding
A room of globes
A few buttons – a control panel
I pushed the buttons again and again
UNTIL dark ancient guards
Rise from their tombs around the orb.

And now there is death – no return.
The battle is on
Swinging wildly, slicing, dicing like a savager
Fighting sword to sword,
Breath to breath,
Face to face.

The battle is won, not any sword touched me

I have the orb to the book
I have solved the puzzle.

All the knowledge of the world now belongs to me!
Game over.

Judge's Comment

A clever poem taking us on a mystical journey before bringing us back to reality with the final surprise.

Brock MANDARIC, 14

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

Wait for the Train!

He is blue
He is number one
His friend is Percy
He has six wheels
He has a whistle
He has a boiler
He has a funnell
He can go through a tunnel
Who am I talking about?

You guessed it!

THOMAS

Judge's Comment

A lovely riddle. Young readers will enjoy this one.

Nicolas MARCHANT, 16

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

Doubt in my mind

Worried I was,
waiting for a decision,
wanting to know if my football career was over,
weaker I was getting as the time passed.

Waiting had come to an end,
wonderful news I heard,
working hard had paid off,
watching myself getting closer and closer to my dreams,
wrapped in happiness I was.

Judge's Comment

I love the insight into the poet's thoughts here - and the final image of being wrapped in happiness made me smile, too.

Christopher MOROZOFF, 14

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

THE FLOOD

I was in a flood
Squashing, breaking, melting houses
I was scared
Worried
And I was drowning
Then I got
Rescued.

Judge's Comment

The poet captures the terror of being swept up in a flood, and the relief of being rescued.

Jordan NEWBOLD, 13

*Holy Spirit College Bellambi
CORRIMAL NSW*

My Senses

Hats are flying everywhere
And my hair is following;
The wind is biting my face
Just like my puppy, Glee.

My umbrella blows inside out
Just as I am about to cross the road.
The car driver looks at me strangely,
Like I'm an alien on the crossing.

The warmth of school beckons me;
Today I am willing, as I'll be escaping this dreadful weather.
Don't you try this on a hot day though -
I know your tricks!!

I can smell the freshly baked scones
As I climb the verandah steps of home.
'Have a good day today, dear?'
I suppose I did.

It really is good to be thirteen!

Judge's Comment

A joyful poem. The last line made me smile, and nod in agreement.

Andy PARK, 18

*Redeemer Baptist School
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW*

The First Step

stepping on the airport
coming through the gate
looking around sight
wanting to be as normal
missing all of left things behind
entering a new school with full of tension
understanding language so hardly
making friends awkwardly
wanting to be adapted for Australian life

there will be better place
there will be better future
it will be good

Judge's Comment

The poet really captures the highs and lows of coming to a new country. Welcome!

Ashley PETERSON, 17

*Baulkham Hills High School
BAULKHAM HILLS NSW*

Seasons

Seasons of the year
Include winter and summer
Winter is so cold

Judge's Comment

Good use of the haiku form, showing that poems can be simple and yet effective.

Kate STATON, 17

*Montague Continuing Education
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC*

my mind has gone blank

My mind has gone BLANK.
I don't know what to say.
I don't know what to do.
I get very upset.

I don't like it
When people interrupt ME
They should know better.
Especially if they are older.

This is boring.
Everything I do is boring.
Why does everything I do have to be boring.
I'm not writing any more.

I just want to go wherever the wind blows.

Judge's Comment

The poet really captures her frustration. The use of repetition is effective and the final line says so much.

Ha-my TRUONG, 17

*Blackburn High School
BLACKBURN VIC*

Nicky Winmar ~A Time for Change, a Time for Equality

Enough was enough,
My skin is not to abuse but be tough,
Wild Magpie supporters as usual, were being rough.
So I pulled out a trick from under my shirt, show off my stuff.
All of the abuse I couldn't take it no more,
The millions abused, hearts being sore,
That can't be ignored, before they become torn
I played a daring tune with my battle horn.
Pulling up my shirt and showing my skin
Showing supporters that I am no sin
We are all equal with a definite view
Except for the offenders I could sure name a few.
Especially the ones who were in the crowd
Definitely being so negative, being loud
So I showed them my skin to show I was proud,
Proud that I am BLACK and I am allowed
And all they did was get even louder,
I've worked so hard to get there and I was even prouder,
I gave the crowd a performance, ten out of ten,
And as I write this down with my pen,
I hope racism doesn't exist in 3010.

Judge's Comment

I love the way the poet has tried to capture this event, and the final line says so much.

Daniel WARRICK, 16

*Montague Continuing Education
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC*

Yeh whatever!

Wherever the wind blows.
Yeh whatever!
The wind has taken me to Narre Warren.
It's all right,

We moved there 'cause
Mum wanted to get out of Hoppers and
Make a new start.

We picked a suburb as far as
Possible from the old one.
Mum looked for a good neighbourhood.

No one bothers us here.
I'm happy to go wherever
The wind takes me.

I'm a carefree person.
I'm funny, friendly and fine.
I like to do my own thing.

I like to do
Whatever comes along
Yeh whatever.

Judge's Comment

I love that the poem really captures a carefree attitude to life.

Clifton L

*Youth Education Centre
CAVAN SA*

Just You and Me

You are one of a kind, a girl that's hard to find.
You light up my world like the Cali sunshine.
And when I'm with you girl, it's like you take me for a ride
So high, it's like we're both up in the sky.
And I think of you, everyday that's passing by,
That ain't no word of a lie, yeah, I love you baby Skye.
And these other girls keep bugging me like flies
But I'll tell them to their face, I'm with you until I die.
Until I'm six feet deep, until I have no heart beat.
'Cause you're like my every, everyday battery.
And you know your love, yeah, it flatters me.
Until the end of time girl, it's just you and me.

Judge's Comment

A clever love song which uses rhyme and rhythm to share its message.

Jamie B

*Youth Education Centre
CAVAN SA*

Light Fades Gradually

These walls cover criminals...Changing individuals?
Lost souls, Flying outta bullet holes.
Counting down the minutes as the sun sets. Darkness creeps.
Quickly, take your last breath and chuck on a skivvy.
Lost in these mind games with the law
Felony acts taking control.

Just ordinary routines, tryin" to get my life clean.
Killing off this drug fiend that's burning off my self-esteem.
This is pure essence to ya standard reference.
Others call this magic medicine, like ya bible to a reverend.
Blessin', not second guessin' ,
or questions- class is in session

Stuck in the shadows, haunted by darkness
Stuggling for light, like a soul outta sight.
Dropping shadows, pin pointing fingers
Crime rates go up as the cash lingers.
Frozen reality...So dark...So cold.
Light fades gradually...

Judge's Comment

I love the raw honesty of this poem which takes me into the mind of the poet. I love the phrase 'Light fades gradually' and the final ellipsis suggesting more to come.

NOTES