

2019 DMPA Results

Junior Secondary

RUNNER-UP

Massimo English, 14

Cranbrook School
Bellevue Hill, NSW

The Thirsty Cow

This hesitation which overrules me,
These sweaty palms, the quivering lip,
The cases zipper, the gun stowed behind,
The crash of the closing car door,
The endlessly bland horizon,
Reflecting my dull soul,
The heavy ute door swinging open in harmony with the clank of my R.M. Williams buckle...

The supple dust enveloped my rough creased face,
Tapping blindly, emotionless, at this vulnerable mind,
Seeping into all pores and rustling through my stubble,
Gleaming down from above cut the rays of life giving death.
Shadows become engulfed by luminous indifference,
Seeking out all points of darkness, nowhere to hide.
The swaying gumtree baked under, it's enduring thirst,
Gazing across vast dry space; The empty river,
The cracked clay, this still day,
This desolate surrounding, refusing promise for any hope.

The soil was dry, my weathered hands too,
It was absurd to seek help,
The lonesome gumtree, the only life within eyesight
Awaiting a voice in the void of simmering heat,
What kind of man are you?
The words reverberated back and forth.
How much longer could I be...
A man doesn't go through this.
"Why is it only me, why am I different!"
"what is making me feel this way, will it ever end?"

Down in the bog she mourned for release,
Raising neck skyward, making contact with me.
Then in time, she knew, but there came no noise.
I loaded the 22. fumbling one round in at a time,
As the gun fires and the smoke rises a shocking silence is overwhelming,
This disturbing image scars me, the immense blood is spilled,

Pouring from this mournful bullet wound,

The journey back is an isolated one,
No gum tree to question me, and she's not there either,
But this mind is not at ease,
The intentions are being challenged,
"At least the cow isn't suffering"

This car which feels so lonesome,
This helpless mind,
This bland plain horizon,
As my eyes gaze,
All I ponder is if there is anybody out there...

Judge Comment:

A fully-imagined poem that takes the reader directly into the landscape of rural Australia: empty rivers, dying trees, 'supple dust' . . . and guns. The heartbreaking image of the doomed cow 'mourning for release' as she raises her neck skyward will stay with you long after you've turned the page. Highly emotive writing.

Copyright DMPA 2019