

2020 DMPA Results

Junior Secondary

WINNER

Ivy Downes, 13

Individual Entry
Katoomba, NSW

Stars

I saw the stars last night.
I lifted my head as if to drink the darkness, and I saw them.
The streetlight flickered out, with my fluttering breath.
And I saw the holes in that great tapestry of sky
Perforated with a knife of fire.
I saw them. I listened to their silent symphony,
Hardly breathing, because too much noise and I would
Scare their beauty away.
I saw them.

When you spend your whole life with something
You forget to wonder.
For so long I forgot to wonder.
I forgot to listen to the stars, their whispers and their music
Their cosmic mutterings.
I forgot to let the night take me in its shadowy embrace,
gentle arms. I forgot how to whisper, holding my words close to me
"Oh, how beautiful."
I forgot.

Because your perfect, poised, vase-of-roses, trapped-in-glass looks
Your lips like petals, your magazines
And pretty laugh, they will fade.
Like all things they will fade, into wan, sepia ghosts.
Except for one thing. One thing that has never faded
In ten billion years of galactic rumination.
The stars. They will never fade.
Their beauty, it can be heard and felt, and drunk and cradled.
It will never fade.

Judge Comment:

A beautifully controlled and sincere poem, with a clever extra layer that set up questions about how we view and value what is undeniably real, and what is purely artificial. Its powerful imagery will linger long after the page has turned.