

## **2015 Copper Croc Written Competition RESULTS**

1st

"In the Name of the Father" – David Campbell

2nd

"Within" – Carol Heuchan

3rd

"Dear Henry" – Shelley Hansen

Very Highly Commended

"Sealed With a Kiss" – Tom McIlveen

Highly Commended

"Soldiers Don't Cry" – Tom McIlveen

"Bobby" – Tom McIlveen

Commended

"Injustice" – Val Wallace

Wild and Wonderful Australia

"Child's Play" – Robyn Sykes

### **Judge's Report Copper Croc 2015**

From nostalgic campfires, boiling billies and war, to contemporary themes of abuse, neglect and confronting demons, such was the diversity of subject matter. These themes dominated this year's "Copper Croc" competition. Sadly, my task was to JUDGE all this diversity which made the task somewhat daunting given the high quality of the submissions. All the works were read and each piece was placed in one of two piles - No, and Maybe. Initially, the Maybe pile was much larger than the No.

In our genre of 'bush' poetry, rhyme and metre is foundational and at competition level it's a given that submissions reflect a thorough working knowledge of these two functions. Although the standard of writing was high, 'inversions' to force rhymes and unnecessary 'modifiers' to pad out the syllable count and maintain metre were the common flaws. Sadly these flaws held back pieces that would otherwise have been GREAT works.

Once the basics were established, the focus was then fixed on the content.

Many struggles are timeless and recur with each generation. In our times we often look back on the struggles of the past as told by those who lived there. Our current challenges are handled without the use of draught horses pulling us out of holes and the use of adzes to shape our environment. I believe future generations will look back with a greater interest in our present day trials and how we overcame them, rather than our interpretation of how we thought our fore-father's fared in their environment.

Writing on themes such as campfires, billies, drovers and swagmen for a touch of 'bush' is unnecessary for 'Bush' poetry and tend to be jaded and overdone. What is most important is

originality - The ability to create images and phrases that have not been heard before. Those images and phrases, speaking clear and confidently, reflect the voice of the poet.

I have been asked to provide a short comment on each of the two winning entries

The effects of abuse on an innocent.

**"In the Name of the Father"** the story is told in first person. The author, perhaps in a confessional or a quiet corner, is agonising in supplication over past abuse inflicted on him and the agony endured throughout his lifetime. The language is humble and the mix of feminine and absolute end-rhymes, reinforce the use of language. The author uses repetition in the first verse of each stanza to drive the supplication to its heart-rending conclusion.

For section, "Wild and Wonderful Australia", it would be easy to fall into the trap of embellishing a 'list' (beaches, the Rock, the Reef). In **"Child's Play"** the author has intrinsically woven, as metaphor, a child playing in the yard for the creation of Australia.

I must confess at my first reading this piece was almost consigned to the "No" pile. However, the author's use of metaphor and simile drew me back - again and again. A clever structure for the stanzas and did not detract from the flow in the reading.

The above two choices reflect rich, evocative and descriptive language with appropriate use of metaphor and simile.

I commend "In the Name of the Father" as first place for the "Copper Croc" and "Child's Play" first place in the section, Wild and Wonderful Australia.

Congratulations to all the placegetters.

Manfred Vijars.

Judge, Copper Croc 2015.

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