

**Cervantes Festival of Art, Cervantes WA.
Written Poetry Results 2017**

First	'The Old Brush Hut'	Terry Piggott, Lynwood WA
V Highly Commended	'Stolen'	Catherine Lee, Thailand
Highly Commended	'The Legacy of C. Y. Oconnor	Shelley Hanson, Marybrough Qld.
Highly Commended	'Secrets of the Desert'	Brenda Joy ,Charters Towers Qld.
Commended	'When you and I were Boys old Friend	Terry Piggott, Lynwood WA
Commended	'Remember It'	Caroline Tuohey, Darlington Pt NSW
Commended	'The Lady of The Lakes'	Terry Piggott, Lynwood WA
Commended	'The Convict's Dream'	Tony Hammill, Cairndale Qld.

JUDGE'S REPORT 2017 CERVANTES ART FESTIVAL BUSH POETRY COMPETITION

Thank you to the Cervantes Cultural Committee for choosing me to judge your Poetry Competition and have the chance to read some wonderful poems by some very talented writers.

In all, 50 entries were received, the vast majority having attempted to comply with the competition requirements of having good rhyme and metre. Like all competitions that attract top class writers, I had considerable difficulty sorting out which of many poems should get my accolades.

The 8 poems in my winners list were all of the very highest class, with faultless rhyme and metre, a strong story line without any discontinuities or ambiguities, and excellent use of language.. Their final groupings were due to the complexities of the rhyming patterns used. The top two were neck and neck and it was purely a subjective choice which produced my winner.

Congratulations to the authors of those poems.

The following ten poems also deserve accolades, for they too had very good story lines with just one or two very small blemishes, "hiccups" in metre, an "almost rhyme", forced rhyme or line out of context, a small discontinuity in storyline, typos, etc

"Tom and the Captain", "Verses for Nurses", "When Irish Eyes are Smiling". "The Ruins", "The Ghost of Johnny Mack", "Our Once Unique Vernacular", "Marching On", "Deja Vu", "As Shadows Fall", "The Wild One",

Of the remainder, I will make the following comments:

A good poem MUST "Stand up by itself", that is a person should be able to read the poem and know what it is about without having to have any prior knowledge. There were several entries where this did not apply

The poem should have universal appeal and not be confined to some local interest several suffered from this also

Where factual events or people are involved, the poem should not totally deny or disregard recorded history without adequate explanation or argument. Highly emotive terms like "a sadistic drunken cur" for an official carrying out his duties in a manner normal for his times does little for the argument.

The poem should have a beginning in which the main thrust of the poem is introduced (not two thirds of the way through) a middle which progresses sequentially in logical steps, avoiding procrastination, ambiguities and discontinuities, and an end fitting to the style of poem. A person

should be able to read the poem, get the whole story from start to finish without having thought "there's something wrong here." These issues too made their appearance in the poems, as did

Poetic Tools - use of various language skills add "colour" to the poem. However, they must be done carefully and not overused

One poem used enjambment (running a sentence across lines with the rhyming word not at the end of the sentence eg

I had written him a letter, which I had for want of better

knowledge sent to where I met him, down the Lachlan, years ago.

several times during the poem, but it was not well done (sentences ended a single word into the next line) This made reading the poem very difficult. You should READ YOUR POEMS OUT LOUD to someone else

Poor metre. This is by far the most difficult concept for some people to grasp. Metre involves consistency in the underlying pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. It is expected that metre will be constant throughout and that verses will all have the same structure of both rhyming pattern and metre.

The words of the poem must be chosen to fit the metre rather than some vain hope that somehow the metre will fit with the words you write

Rhyme - For the couple of entries of "free verse" I would suggest that in future you read the conditions of entry and abide by them. You are simply wasting your money, free verse entries are often some form of protest at the restrictions placed on structure, they will never get a placing. Would you enter a cake in a jam competition - they are both cooking!

For those who made some attempts, "almost rhyming" is not considered good enough. Rhyming words are those that completely rhyme WHEN SPOKEN, Songwriters can get away with words that sound similar, but poets cannot.

Please note - I try and do my judging based on the conditions of entry and consequently I pay little heed to capitalisation, 'Punctu-ation', Gramma etc. These I feel are simply part of the poet's artistic choices. I do however expect to find some indication where pauses belong, particularly in mid-line, as this helps in reading the poem. I also expect consistency in language for any particular character in the poem Should it come down to having two or more poems which I am unable to split on story, rhyme, metre and structure, only then will I resort to picking nits.

For those who believe that they could improve their poetic skills, there are many aids available:

Rhyming dictionaries are a good start (but avoid those printed by American companies) also the many free ones on the internet (again beware American rhymes lass and grass do not rhyme) -

You can find several good references to writing "Bush Poetry" (this, by definition has very good rhyme and metre) on the Australian Bush Poets website www.abpa.org.au

Reading poems by "the masters" and also many great modern writers will hopefully steer you in the right direction (Look for "Bush Verse, ballads, etc in Section 821A in your local council library)

Consider joining a "creative writing" or Bush poetry group - some of these have internet forums where you can discuss the merits of your poems

You can also get in contact with poets who have penned the top poems, most writers are only too happy to pass on their knowledge and experience.

Some poets (including myself) run workshops for groups wishing to improve their skills

In conclusion, Congratulations to those who have rated highly in this competition, for the remainder - keep trying, consider the options I have listed for improving your skills

Regards,

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