

‘Freedom competition Judge’s Report

JUDGE’S REPORT FOR 2017 ADELAIDE PLAINS POETRY COMPETITION – THEME: FREEDOM

By Jude Aquilina

I felt privileged to be the judge for a competition with such an important and inspiring theme as FREEDOM. Thank you to all the poets who entered – you reminded me of the many different forms that freedom can take. These included: freedom from war; freedom of speech and thought; freedom in retirement and through travel; through bushwalking and horse riding; freedom from a refugee’s point of view; freedom in nature; freedom from abuse, racism and ageism; freedom through religion and freedom through zen; freedom in self-sufficiency and going off the grid; even freedom in death from suffering and freedom to reunite with loved ones in the afterlife. Congratulations to the competition organisers for choosing such a wide-ranging and thought-provoking theme.

The quality of the poetry was extremely high, in every section, making my job as judge difficult. Many more poems than I can mention deserve praise. And I was especially thrilled to read so many amazing poems by school students. I know the future of poetry is in good hands.

In the **Primary School** Section I chose four poems to **Commend**:

- **Feeling Free** (1) **Lorena Burford** - Horizon Christian School
- **Freedom** (18) **Amelie Kowald** – Domino Servite College
- **Camping Moment** (3) **Sophie Manuel** - Horizon Christian School
- **Waking up on Saturday** (8) **Benjamin Trinkle** – Domino Servite College

And I chose the poem **The Freedom to Read** (17) to **Highly Commend Kezia Ziegelmann** – Domino Servite College

For **Third Prize**, I chose a poem titled **Charlotte and her eggs** (6) **Alexandra Hill** – Tea Tree Gully Primary School – a clever and unusual poem, with rich poetic language and apt use of the senses.

For **Second Prize**, I chose the poem titled **Freedom in Science** (14) **Wesley Trinkle** – Domino Servite College – this enthusiastic account of the freedom, wonder and creativity in science, had me thinking and kept me smiling. This young poet has captured the thrill and passion in engaging in creative thoughts and experiments.

First Prize goes to a poem titled **Freedom for me** (16) **Brandon George** – Domino Servite College - a beautiful and vivid poem about finding freedom in the Australian countryside, when, I quote, ‘the evening shines like brass’. With images like this, I was transported me to another place. Congratulations to a poet with a talent for painting word-scapes!

In the **Secondary School** Section I chose three poems to **Commend**:

- **The Beautiful Word** (25) **Amal Tlaa** – Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College
- **What is it?** (28) **Olivia Hayes** – Domino Servite College

- **I wanted to fly in the beautiful sky** (12) **Jasit Kaur** – Domino Servite College

And I **Highly Commended** three poems:

- **What happened to our acceptance?** (6) **Chloe Wightman** – Domino Servite College
- **Freedom is a funny word, isn't it?** (5) **Jesse Blakers** – Hawker College
- **Why would you wear something so inappropriate** (4) **Freya Cox** - The Friends School

For **Third Prize** in the Secondary School Section, I chose a poem titled **Freedom Lies in Being Bold** (8) – **Aimy Tran** - Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College - a mature, intelligent poem that is a reminder of what women have achieved, and what is yet to be achieved in regards to equality. This is a bold and thought-provoking poem.

I chose, for **Second Prize** a poem titled **A white blanket laid over Syria** (13) – **Rabjot Kaur** - Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College The poem relates vivid images of human suffering and gives the war in Syria a human face. This is a memorable, emotive poem that does not shy away from truth; an important narrative that needs to be written and read.

First Prize is awarded to a vivid lyrical poem simply titled **Freedom** (2) – **Maya Chromik** – Horizon Christian School. This poetic list of images captures the sense of freedom that we, here in Australia, are fortunate to enjoy free of charge, like, I quote 'collecting stars at night' and 'finding dirt roads that lead to the unknown. This clever poet has put together a collage of positive experiences to capture the theme of Freedom in a clever and resonating way. Congratulations!

In the **Open Section**, there were many great poems that addressed the theme of Freedom in quirky ways like the three poems I award **Commendations**:

- **The Cost of Zen** (55) **Helen Thurloe**
- **a peregrine falcon** (86) **Claire Albrecht**
- **Child of My Heart** (28) **Shelley Hansen**

And I **Highly Commended** four outstanding poems:

- **1976** (no number) **Stephen Smithyman**
- **Strawberries and Poppies** (25) **Donna Edwards**
- **Advance Australia - Fair** (29) **Chris Richardson**
- **Moon meeting** (62) **Nina Scott-Bohanna**

Third Prize in the Open Section goes to a poem titled **Free at Last** (80) **Tom McIlveen** that takes the reader back to early Australian convict history. Rhyme, rhythm and meter are employed to effect; with this style suiting the era. I also enjoyed the authentic voice and dark humour.

I awarded **Second Prize** to a poem titled **Transitions** (84) **Kerry Harte** an ironic poem with moments of dark humour. The poem is about reading a shiny brochure for a nursing home, in which, I quote, are 'The faces of the people ... bright and bubbly as champagne'. I like this poet's unflinching tone and apt imagery.

First Prize goes to a poem titled, **Freedom wakes me in the morning** (69) **Rhonda Cotsell** It was a joy to read this intelligent, compassionate take on the theme. The poet focusses on the small things that mean freedom but also encompasses the big picture. This poet has captured the

intangible, the essence of what freedom is and what it means. Congratulations to this brilliant poet. May freedom continue to wake you in the morning.

Thank you, Carolyn and the Adelaide Plains Poets for this enlightening experience.

Jude Aquilina

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As the President of Adelaide Plains Poets, I thank the judge and of course all of the entrants in this competition, where we received well around 130 poems from around Australia, based on our broad topic of **Freedom**. As the Competition Secretary I say thank you to all of the lovely poets who sent their work to me and kept me entertained as I read the poems as that came to me in the mail, or by hand. And of course thank you to the teachers involved, keeping love of language alive in the young people they work with every day at their work!

Competition is judged, life moves on

So the Adelaide Plain's 'Freedom' poetry competition has been judged, awards handed over, or in the post, and now the next thing is approaching fast. The annual poetry brings out wonderful poetry, competing to be the best of the best, all around Australia.

And my, was the best certainly the best. If you read the Judge's Report, you can see that Jude Aquilina was definitely of the opinion that these poetry entries were quality poems. As the competition secretary, I agree. I felt the overall quality of the entries was outstanding, and many poems could have been the winners.

Entering competitions though, means that you may not win ... And of course on another day, or under another judge, another poet may have won. I would not have liked to have to try to choose between poems for this event, there was only very little between the entries. I did enjoy reading all of the poems sent to me, in my position of Competition Secretary - all of those wonderful poems sent to me in the mail, and I didn't have to pay a thing for the privilege!

I thank all of the poets who sent work in, and congratulate the winners. I also thank the teachers who helped and encouraged their students to enter this competition, and all of the other things they do to encourage the writing of poetry. Poetry and the writing and reading of it can open the young mind to many different things, and with the thinking on different things, comes knowledge and understanding.

Helping young people in this way is surely a wonderful thing for the students initially and for the entire country. Having young people growing up and moving into the workforce, when they are open to many different ideas and options, surely that bodes well for us all!

Carolyn Cordon.