

## Australia's Will Moody scoops the pool in International Written!

Despite logistical snags forcing the abandonment of the performance aspect of the International Cowboy/Bush Poetry Rodeo, the International Written Competition went ahead as planned with Hunter Bush Poets the sponsors of prize money for both the serious and humorous sections. The qualified judges had to choose from over sixty entries from Australia, U.S. and Canada in both categories.

The requirement was for a rhyming and metered poem with a Cowboy or Bush flavour. Basically it had to have a rural type theme. In Australia, 'Bush' poetry has rhyme and meter but can be about almost anything. But in U.S. and Canada, the cowboy poetry (and music) celebrates the heritage and culture of the West. To ensure a level playing field, all entries had to comply with the outback/agricultural/rural type requirement. Banjo Paterson, eat your heart out!

The three judges agreed Beryl Stirling's poem, "The Swagman's Ghost" was very cleverly written with strict adherence to the technical aspects and theme requirements. It was a quirky story ( a doomed Waltzing Matilda re-enactment)with broad and advanced language use. It mastered a complex rhyming pattern to win the Humorous category.

The serious section posed a real problem for judges who, from an outstanding top ten, had great difficulty separating two magnificent poems. When it unfolded that both poems were written by Bellingen writer Will Moody, organisers decided to make the poems "Rafting on the River in the Spring" and "To the Cowboy Poets" equal first place and subsequently named Will Moody of Bellingen, New South Wales, the overall Champion and winner of the Bronze sculpture donated by Carol Heuchan.

As expected, it was a difficult competition to judge. Allowances had to be made for differences in pronunciation and indeed to somewhat unfamiliar speech in some instances. By and large, the Cowboy poets are not as pedantic with scansion and or rhyming as we are here but balance this by being able to think 'outside the square' with quirky word smithing and great story telling.

Other than those at the top, the humorous poems were perhaps a little disappointing. Many lacked technical or literary skills or were not really humorous entertainment. However, the standard of writing has improved since the inception of this category in competitions so it is to be hope it continues.

On the other hand, the depth of quality in the serious section was outstanding.

Judges placed to tenth in each section and placegetters were from Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales, Colorado (U.S.), Washington (U.S.), and Alberta (Canada).

Thank you to all the poets who supported this competition and to those people who volunteered in various ways to ensure the event continued.

Results and winning poem attached.

## International Cowboy/BushPoetry

### 2013 Written Competiton

#### SERIOUS

Equal 1 <sup>st</sup>	Rafting on the River in the Spring To the Cowboy Poets	Will Moody, Bellingen, NSW Will Moody, Bellingen, NSW
3 <sup>rd</sup>	When Riders Come to Call	Susie Knight, Colorado, USA
4 <sup>th</sup>	100 Years from Now	Doris Daley, Alberta, Canada
5 <sup>th</sup>	The Days when Stockmen Rode	David Campbell, Beaumaris, Vic.
6 <sup>th</sup>	Reflections of the Kimberley	Brenda Joy, Charters Towers, Qld.
7 <sup>th</sup>	The Wilgowrah Wagon	Kevin Pye, Mudgee, NSW
8 <sup>th</sup>	The Farmers' Strike	Robyn Sykes, Binalong, NSW
9 <sup>th</sup>	Bill's Red Whiz	Susie Knight, Colorado, USA
10 <sup>th</sup>	Past the Black Stump	Alan James Messer, Coomera Waters, Qld.

#### HUMOROUS

1 <sup>st</sup>	The Swagman's Ghost	B.J. Stirling, Cooranbong, NSW
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Kitchen Cupboards	Doris Daley, Alberta, Canada
3 <sup>rd</sup>	The Bandiwallop Ball	Tony Hammill, Carindale, Qld.
4 <sup>th</sup>	A Country Town Event	Allan Goode, Beachmont, Qld.
5 <sup>th</sup>	The Ballad of Henry McGrew	David Campbell, Beaumaris, Vic.
6 <sup>th</sup>	Haughtyculture	B.J.Stirling, Cooranbong, NSW
7 <sup>th</sup>	Darby's Stampede String	Susie Knight, Colorado, USA
8 <sup>th</sup>	Herb Thompson	Del Gustafson      USA
9 <sup>th</sup>	Uncle Erko's Mud Machine	Allan Goode, Beachmont, Qld.
10 <sup>th</sup>	Chanel No. 5	Shelley Hansen, Maryborough, Qld.

#### OVERALL CHAMPION

Will Moody, Bellingen, NSW

## Rafting on the River in the Spring ©Will Moody2013

Rex, I still remember when we got out after school,  
how we'd hurry to the river and our favourite rocky pool  
just below the weir at Thomson's, with young Timothy O'Toole...  
rafting in the Spring.

When we'd had a swim and cooled off, then we'd go and get the raft  
made of palings, rope and kero tins...she *was* a rugged craft!  
But she gave us lots of good times...Rex, remember how we laughed?  
Rafting on the river in the Spring?

Camouflaged with old tarpaulins near the bank above the weir,  
Hidden under hanging branches should a grown-up come too near,  
we would push into the river with two sapling poles to steer...  
three mates on the river in the Spring.

We would pole her up the river for a mile or maybe two  
(well, I might exaggerate a bit, I'll leave that up to you).  
Then we'd let her drift, engaged in battles with a pirate crew...  
masters of the river in the Spring.

Sometimes we'd tie the raft up where a rocky creek flowed down  
to add its cool, clear water to the river's muddy brown  
and we'd go and hunt for yabbies with some raw meat on a string,  
living off the river in the Spring.

Remember raiding orchards where they grew along the banks?  
And the farmers, if they caught us, would be sure to show their thanks  
with yelled curses and a salvo...but we knew they loaded blanks!  
Raiders on the river in the Spring!

We disturbed the local wildlife as we glided past the shore...  
there were roos of course, and wombats, there were emus by the score.  
And ... when a blue kingfisher would flash by us on the wing...  
*magic* on the river in the Spring.

Those Springs seemed to last for ever...filled with mesmerizing days  
fishing floating on the river in a timeless, aimless haze.  
Until we had to leave behind our carefree, childish ways...  
wondering what the future years would bring.

And I know that there are other...bitter...memories we share.  
Like monsoon nights... jungle fights ...and mates we lost out there.  
But mate, I'd rather look back to a kinder landscape where,  
Tim's still goes rafting with us in the Spring.

Spring and Summer's far behind us Rex... the years flew by so fast.  
And now old mate, we feel our age in Winter's chilly blast.  
But while I can, I'll treasure all those warm days in the past  
drifting on the river in the Spring.

Rex, I wonder if you hear me, though you only sit and stare  
out the windows of this hospice from your therapeutic chair.  
And whether **you** remember...  
does some memory still cling?  
    Of days when we went rafting...  
                                  on the river,  
                                  in the Spring.