

2022 My Brother Jack Awards

Open Short Story Award

It was a great pleasure to once again judge the My Brother Jack Awards and see the breadth of storytelling talent in the Glen Eira community. The stories this year had great range in terms of subject, themes, characters and setting, from war zones and fantastical realms to home streets and domestic settings. The characters were diverse in background, age, and gender. The tone of the stories ranged from terrifying to contemplative to romantic to aspirational. I was constantly surprised and entertained.

First prize goes to **Joanne**, a coming of age story with beautiful subtleties and complexities. The main character befriends his big brother's girlfriend after his brother has called off the relationship. There are many small, nostalgic details that join together to paint the bigger picture. The characterisation is strong, the tensions between characters are well drawn, and the voice resonant.

Second prize goes to **The Shadows in your Face**. In this story, a relationship unravels in the oppressive heat of a changing climate. Ordinary moments are fuelled with desire, tension and impending loss. It's powerful.

Third prize goes to **Grace**. The narrative consists of a conversation between an older married couple who are still in love and still the best of friends. They contemplate the passing of time and memories in their home, the next stage of life and their legacy. It's a sweet, genuine and entertaining story.

The highly commended stories are **Walker Street**, an imaginative story where the houses contemplate the changes on their street and **Growing Pains**, a positive exploration of a teen taking the big step toward sexual maturity.

- **Angela Meyer**