



Open Poetry Category

Judge's Report – Wendy Joseph

There's clearly a lot of talent in the city of Glen Eira! There was a terrific response to the Open Poetry Category and the work was of a very high standard. While it was a great pleasure to read so many interesting entries it did make my work as a poetry judge very difficult. There was a big range of subject matter, styles and presentation (including an extraordinary comic graphic) but as a poetry judge, I can only consider the language. If you are not a winner please remember this is only one person's opinion and keep writing! Thank you to all the poets who entered - hope you do so again next year.

Commended - *Jerusalem you've really done it to me this time*

Third Prize – *The Steam Rose* by Rob Wilson for its mystery and beguiling imagery

Second Prize – *Aisha* by Gayelene Carbis for its use of simple language to effectively build a very strong work.

First Prize – *The Memory of Water* by Kim Skeltys for its originality, beauty and multiple levels of meaning.

Open Poetry – *First Prize*

The Memory Of Water

by Kim Skeltys

She said

I was searching for something

that wasn't there -

the memory of water

how absurd

her experiment had proved

when two molecules meet and merge

in blood from lovers' veins

no trace remains

once they've gone their separate ways

she was sure there was no chemistry

water has no memory

But I said

you're wrong

there's a hidden bond

between the two

who once were one

and the blood that bound them then

will bind them always

each red cell a part of that red sea

that flows through our veins eternally

and it will endure

like the memory of water

Author's note: *French immunologist Jacques Benveniste performed a series of experiments in the 1980's that suggested that homeopathic dilutions could have an effect by altering the structure of water, which seemed to "remember" the original molecules it was exposed to – a journalist coined the phrase "the memory of water".*

Open Poetry – *Second Prize*

Aisha

by Gayelene Carbis

My mother-in-law, she refuses to give me a key to
the apartment. This is only a tiny part of
much bigger story. My husband says nothing,
he follows his mother. I have no privacy, no
key to get back in if I want to go out. So
I am preparing to go. I am taking my son.
I have looked at a place in Fitzroy. I will
move soon. My husband can follow. Or
he can stay with his mother. But I can't.
I simply can't continue, this way. If
you can't have the key to open
your own door, what do you
have? In this country golden key
for a 21st birthday. I'm only
nineteen but I have marriage
and my small son.
I deserve gold.

Open Poetry – *Third Prize*

The Steam Rose

by Rob Wilson

At night, when you peel off your clothes
and pull a soft singlet down over your chest
light gets a chance.

Turn down the lamp on the make-up table.
Let the steam ease out from the hole beneath your sternum.

Every week you bleach your hair short.
Sneaking around at night painting stop signs blue.

Goat tracks become thinner
the deeper you go
then cease to be.

Furniture under white sheets
could be ghosts in the empty house.

Open Poetry – *Commended*

Jerusalem You've Really Done It To Me This Time

by Rabbi Ralph Genende OAM

Jerusalem you've really done it to me this time
broken my tooth on your callous stones
inflamed my lips on your cobbled prayers
stubbed my toe to fall on my face on your stolid stairs
I was just another tourist
searching for a piece of eternity
but all I got was a piece of your mind
Serene in your certainty
timeless in your boldness
you left me scrabbling for my soul
grasping for some elusive purity
gasping for some cold clarity
You abandoned me naked on your walls
feeble among the pilgrims and pretenders
just another lost and tortured Jew
stumbling in his insecurities
looking for a break in your solitude