

Primary Poetry Poetry

Judge's Report – Ozlem Baro

One of the things I love about judging the Primary School Poetry Category is how honest the children are as they observe and try to understand the world around them. It is refreshing to read poems that initially appear simple but are actually quite profound in their interpretation. They are almost always positive and hopeful, even when discussing difficult, dark or challenging subjects. The children often have a twist at the end of their poems that leaves me with a thoughtful smile.

Although I look forward to judging the My Brother Jack Awards every year, I was particularly curious about the submissions for 2020. The coronavirus has had a massive impact on our world, and I knew many children would be trying to make sense of it. I wondered what themes would emerge and how the children would relate to this new way of being.

There were a number of poems about the pandemic and the things around it such as lockdown, zoom calls and home-schooling. It was clear that many children missed being at school with their friends but also really enjoyed spending more time with their families. Even though some frustration and sadness regarding limitations came through in their poetry, the children were generally positive about the overall situation. I could see that they had also incorporated some of the coronavirus language into their poems. This made me reflect on how children absorb a lot more from the world around them than we think.

As with previous years there were many poems referring to the immediate environment of the children. These included a few about nature, the seasons and specific landscapes, as well as the things within them such as trees, flowers, the moon and stars. When writing about these, the children often used their senses to describe what they could see, hear, taste, smell and touch. They also used a variety of poetic methods such as rhyme and metaphor to convey their thought processes. I especially enjoyed these because they were often clever or unexpected.

The quality of the 2020 entries was exceptionally high and I struggled to choose a winner. Even narrowing the poems down was hard because they were all so clever and delightful in such different ways.

Highly Commended – *Nothing*

This felt like a very sophisticated and well-crafted poem. Not only did it rhyme in clever ways but the subject matter was unexpected and thought provoking. The concept of "nothing" can be complicated and philosophical yet the writer was able to explain it clearly from a child's unique perspective.

Highly Commended – *Mother Nature Tickling My Senses*

I was pleasantly surprised when I realised that the writer of this lovely and happy poem had used the five senses to structure their work. It made me think about how present children are, especially out in nature. The descriptions of the world around them were vivid and lively, a joy to read.

Highly Commended – *Bushfires*

A bushfire can seem like such an overwhelming thing to a child yet the writer of this poem was able to simply and beautifully capture the quiet devastation. A short but powerful piece that considers the impact of a bushfire on people, animals and the landscape.

First Prize – *A Different Holiday*

“A Different Holiday” really captured the feel of lockdown life in a pure and simple way. The rhyme provided it with a music that implied positivity even before getting to the hopeful end. I thought the title was a lovely reinterpretation of the situation. The poem reflects a quiet resilience and is perfectly complete in its brevity.

Primary Poetry– *First Prize*

A Different Holiday

by Annabelle Fahey

Stuck at home

Nothing to do

Sitting all alone

Just me and you

Looking out the window

No cars in sight

Waiting to go out

Maybe tomorrow I might

Primary Poetry– *Highly Commended*

Bushfires

by Olivia Meszaros

Majestic forest stands strong and tall.

Burning green leaves vanish and fall.

Animals and humans devastated by fire.

Locals thinking what must they acquire.

Landscape flat, charred with smoke and soot.

Lucky are the locals alive and still on foot.

The fire took everything in its path quickly.

How this all started, a painstaking mystery.

Primary Poetry– *Highly Commended*

Mother Nature Tickling My Senses

by Srishti Suresh

As I walk out, I see the golden rays of sunshine beaming brighter than ever

And a flutter of colourful butterflies looking for their sweet nectar.

I hear joyful lorikeets chirping on a huge wattle tree

And the humming sound of a buzzing queen bee.

I smell the strong scent of freesias, sweet and delicious

Reminding me of strawberry pies, they smell gorgeous!

Basil and mint leaves around the corner, I pluck a few to taste

And pop them in my mouth. Wow! I am simply amazed.

I stop by to touch the cute little fruits of a lilly pillly

Shoving a bunch into my pocket, I skip home happily.

Primary Poetry– *Highly Commended*

Nothing

by Zach Verginis

I looked up and then down, left and then right. There was nothing to see, there was nothing in sight.

There were no cars, no buildings, not even a chair. There was nothing even as faint as a hair.

There was nothing but white, nothing red or green. Really, there was nothing to be seen.

I ran and I walked, I screamed and I talked. There was nothing to hear, not even a squawk.

The walls were blank, the floors were boring. You couldn't tell if it was night or morning.

There was no water, only land. All I knew, was this place was bland.

“Hello”, I called, starting to feel cold. Finding something in this place was rarer than gold.

“Is anyone there?”, I heard someone murmur. It startled me, and I grew firmer.

“Hello, my name is Freddy O' Neal and I have to tell you that nothing is real”.