

# Senior Secondary Poetry

## Judge's Report – Alicia Sometimes

2020 has been a time of uncertainty. This was reflected in the narratives within the submissions. Poems about isolation, fragility and Covid-19 were large in numbers but also many more were about hope, spirituality, faith, overcoming societal restraints and the love of family and home. Reading through these submissions I am comforted by the many stirring lines, the vivid analogies, the twists of phrases and the originality of the pieces. It is always difficult to choose a winner and even more heart-breaking when beloved poems only miss out by the slenderest of margins. It was a pleasure to read all the entries and marinate in all the pages of poetry. Emily Dickinson wrote, 'If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.' Congratulations to all the poets who entered the My Brother Jack Awards this year and high praise (and virtual confetti) to those incredible writers who won.

**Winner:** Greece

**Highly Commended:** Evolution

*Greece* is a tender exploration of so many things new and familiar. The poem is evocative at its core allowing the reader to access all our senses at once. We feel we are witnessing the sunrise, devouring the last bite of cheese and walking along the pebbles in this captivating seascape. It is well-crafted, alive and sharp. As readers, we feel we are in confident hands.

# Senior Secondary Poetry– *First Prize*

## Greece

by Stephanie Kondopoulos

Smooth pebbles below my feet,  
The remnants of a cliffside battered by sea.  
Salty air and liquid gold mix in my mouth  
As I take another bite.  
Nature's palette has no rules here.

Peeling apart the green, milky skin  
Revealing tiny buds of sweetness,  
Red like ruby crystals.  
I pluck yet another fig from the tree.  
The roosters sing their anthem.

I gather dozens of tiny black jewels in my hands.  
Running past humble abodes lining dirt tracks  
I hear the crashing waves as close as my own footsteps.  
Stooped over on the sun kissed stairway.  
An open door gratefully receives the olives.

In the darkness, on the rooftop.  
Each mouthful a cloud of sweet and savoury.  
The silky oil drips down my chin as I look across  
At the thousands of trees bearing mother nature's  
Finest creations. I savour the last bite of cheese.

Sunrise. Fish are flailing about on handcrafted hooks.  
That's enough for us. Food doesn't need dressing up  
When it comes from the most beautiful place on earth.  
The smell of comfort food calls my name,  
My stomach and heart are full.

# Senior Secondary Poetry– *Highly Commended*

## Evolution

by Caleb Gering

1.

Northern White Rhino drinks from the watering  
hole, its horns borne high and proud  
The reflection is clear, pure

2.

Soon, an untamed head held low,  
wary of the beginning  
Ripples cling to the edges of the watering hole

Horns ground down by churning civilisation,  
an infected limb needing amputation,  
instead corrupting

Bullets begin to pierce the hide

3.

Gunmetal smog looms, santising the untamed

Tear streaks stain the hide, like thick blood on  
the sanguine grass

A carcass, packaged and sold  
the horn a manufactured photograph for  
ready consumption

4.

Golems of the civilisation carry  
iron guns, a dark irony  
the society must protect the untamed  
from its own machinations

The rhino sorrowful marches into  
its cage

The watering hole is barren

5.

A steady march towards the black oblivion  
will swallow whole the last northern white rhino