

## **Grace Yee – My Brother Jack Awards**

### **Judge's selection and report 2025**

#### **Junior Primary Poetry:**

It was a joy to read all of the poems entered, and to see so many young people engaging with poetry.

It appears that there was much fun to be had in the writing of them. This was evident in the word play: in diverse approaches to rhythm, pace and tone, and in the embracement of rhyme, alliteration, imagery and voice.

The topics covered in the Junior Primary section were diverse. There were poems about cities, sport, colours, food and odes to mums; many poems about the earth and the natural world – its oceans, beaches, waterfalls, oceans, the weather, the seasons, the sky; and numerous dedications to animals, including foxes, hamsters, seals and turtles, with the most popular being puppies, dogs and snakes.

I read each poem silently, and then again out loud. I listened for rhythm, pace and the sounds of the words together. I considered how the poem looked on the page, and looked for play, flair and a sense of adventure.

The poems that made the shortlist include wonderfully detailed descriptions and images, and offer thoughtful, unique or striking perspectives.

It is difficult to believe that these poems were written by such young writers, and so difficult to place the finalists. Congratulations to all!

#### **First Place:**

**‘The Somersaulting Cloud’** [A46]. Each line in this fun and engaging, well-paced poem presents a clear image in precise detail. Both the revelation at the end, and the metaphor of the dog as cloud is brilliantly considered.

#### **Highly Commended:**

**‘Penguins in Antarctica’** [A37]. The narrative voice in this cinematic poem has a David-Attenborough-vibe, conveying a sense that the penguin is under close observation. The move to the penguin's point of view and its yearning for their

mother – coupled with an implied zooming out to reveal an expanded view of the ocean – makes for a superb ending.

**‘Please, thank you, you’re welcome.’** [A16] is a delightful, highly imaginative and engaging poem with unexpected images and a terrific sense of rhythm, rhyme, and pace. The narrative voice is exuberant and assured.

**‘Rain’** [A58] is a thoughtful, self-contained, concrete poem. Succinct and impactful, its rendering in the shape of a single raindrop offers a small yet potent space for reflection.

### **Senior Primary Poetry:**

It was a great pleasure to read the senior primary poems.

Congratulations to all those who took the time to write and enter the competition. It takes great courage to put one’s thoughts into words and send them out into the world.

These poems were far more numerous (than the Junior Primary poems) and covered very diverse terrain. In addition to poems about animals, the earth and the natural environment, there were poems about monsters, travel, numbers, music, toilets, diversity and difference, emotions, spirituality, libraries and the Queen – amongst many other topics!

In my reading, I was drawn to unique perspectives and voices, close attention to detail, arresting imagery, opening lines that hooked me in and closing lines that gave me pause.

As with the Junior Primary poems, rhyme and wordplay were popular, and I was delighted to see much experimentation with diction, sounds and form.

There were several narrative – or story–poems, as well as the more contemplative lyric poems, including forms such as the limerick, cinquain, and various odes.

Some poems addressed complex emotions such as hope and pain, and raised thoughtful questions about life and the state of the world we live in.

Selecting the finalists was no easy task, but what these poems had in common were confident voices, an intimate engagement with their subject matter, and evidence of deeper reflection.

**First Place:**

**‘Eau de Toilette’** [B20] is a witty and lively poem with outstanding attention to line and stanza formation, sharp details and clever observations.

**Highly Commended:**

**‘Different’** [B130] is a thoughtful poem, boldly narrated and remarkable for its courage and unapologetic self-affirmation.

**‘Misunderstood’** [B30]: is an evocative compassionate poem written from a dingo’s point of view, with impressive attention to sensory detail.

**‘Star-Bound Bond’** [B31] is an ambitious poem with striking imagery that anthropomorphises (humanises) the relationship between the sky and the ocean.