

## **2023 My Brother Jack Awards**

### **Primary Short Story Award**

Firstly, thank you to everyone who submitted stories to the primary section of this year's My Brother Jack Literary Awards. I *love* reading your stories so much – the imagination; the command of language, the humour and sophistication makes me certain that the world is in very safe hands.

There were 116 entries in this section from grade 1 to grade 6. The breadth of subjects was astonishing. Themes that emerged in quite a few stories this year included tales of magical portals, being an outsider, and dreams. There were beautiful description of place and a real concern for others, for justice, and for nature. There were stories about cows, cyborgs, dead forks and freckled frogs. There were stories about dragons, dinosaurs, pluto and the wild west. There were jungles, fairies, zombies, vets, haunted houses, detectives, movie stars and volcanoes. Quite a few of the stories touched on death and grief in very moving ways.

There were so many promising stories in this year's entries – stories with a strong beginning, that petered out. Other stories painstakingly set a scene, only to rush to finish within the word count.

I read all of the stories through twice. The first read through was to see if I enjoyed it; the second read through was to consider the originality, message, technical expression, form and flow, and overall impact. Once I had a short list, I dragged my school-librarian mother out of retirement to help me decide the winner.

Thank you again to everyone for trusting me with your stories. I loved reading them. For those of you who have placed – huge congratulations! For those of you who might be feeling a bit disappointed – I've been in your shoes. Just know that if all the exciting, funny, clever, unique, beautiful, and thought provoking parts of these stories were stars at night, the entire sky would be blazing.

#### ***Sky Change* – First Place**

*Sky Change* snuck up on me. It's a poetic and original piece of writing, structured around and charting the changes in the sun over a day. I was immediately captivated by the rich use of language and the unique themes. I knew I'd found my winner when the next day I was brushing my teeth and still thinking about it. 'Sky Change' persuades its readers to slow down, to pay attention, not just to the natural world, but also to how it constantly changes. It's a wonderful piece and an impressive achievement from someone so young.

### ***Another Regular Shopping Experience in 2546* – Highly Commended**

*Another Regular Shopping Experience in 2546* is a very entertaining read about a shopping trip gone very awry in a post-apocalyptic world set in the year 2546. It has an assured and playful voice, with lots of humour and action woven in.

### ***The Truth About Cinderella* – Highly Commended**

*The Truth About Cinderella* is a fresh and thought-provoking retelling of the well-loved tale of sweet, innocent Cinderella, where she's not as sweet and innocent as everyone believes. There are clever details and funny moments woven throughout to create a witty, imaginative story.

### ***The Mistake* – Highly Commended**

*The Mistake* is a dark and striking read involving a withered hand, a raccoon (which may or may not turn into an apple), and a magical tree. *The Mistake* uses great descriptions to explore what can happen when you make destructive, selfish decisions.

### ***The Adventures of Egg and Bacon at Chefland* – Early Primary Encouragement Award**

This story is a rollicking, imaginative tale that made me laugh. While I loved the illustrations and was impressed with the layout of the pages, I was equally as impressed by the narrative, which was engaging, humorous and well paced.