

## JUDGES REPORT KAREN W TREANOR POETRY AWARDS 2010

It is an honour to be asked to judge the Karen W Treanor Awards this year, and I would like to thank the KSP Writers' Centre for inviting me to take on the role. I was presented with 35 entries in the Open Section and 25 entries in the Youth Category.

The first, and easiest, task is to read through all entries and make a footnote as to poems to be 'read again'. Good poetry is relatively easy to identify, more difficult to construct. As a reader we need to see:

1. Evidence of poetic purpose. Has the poem been written with some sort of message/impetus? Is there evidence the poem had to be told?
2. Clarity of form. Has the poet been aware of the importance of structure? Is there an architecture in the writing which both clarifies the poetic line/drive and enables the reader to move through the poem with interest and ease?
3. Sharp diction. Is the poetic language deft and concise? Is there a clear sense of joy in having found the 'right' word? Is there an avoidance of cliché?
4. Deployment of imagery. Has the poet managed to work simile/metaphor/alliteration /onomatopoeia into the poetic fabric? Is there attention to internal rhyme rather than simply using end-of-line rhyme?
5. Rhythm. Do the poetic lines create a pulse, a kind of mantra or drive that kicks the poem forward?
6. Enjambment. Are the lines of the poem worked out such the reading eye/mind moves from one line to next with ease and anticipation?
7. Use of poetic logic. Is there a link between the mind of the poet and the reader? Has there been care given to the over-arching mood/look/presentation?

In both the Open and Youth sections, too many poets chose the rhyme/end-of-line scheme without realizing the dangers inherent. Modern poetic form offers so much more. Additionally, free form poetry does not mean absence of form ! The reader must feel some attention/focus on the construction of the poem. Buildings need architects !

For the winning and commended poems and poets, these works stood out. Comments as follows:

### Open Section

#### Commended:

1. 'upon reading d.a.levy' by Christopher Konrad: engaging writing, good use of form, striking use of diction.
2. 'Labrynth' by Rose van Son : excellent language, clear use of form, a poem that wants to be told and listened to.
3. 'Before the dark' by Flora Smith : excellent use of sensorial detail and imagery, intriguing form.
4. 'The Love Lives of Joseph Banks' by Roland Leach : well structured, concise and clear choice of diction.
5. 'A day alone' by Frances Richardson : striking imagery, taut lining/stanzaic structure, evocative imagery.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Place

‘Nullarbor’ by Catherine Wright : a deceptively simple yet powerful poem, beautifully taut, moves like a camera, increasing in intensity. Very strong language....”the wind sings of a truant sea”.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

‘Skins’ by Mags Webster : very evocative, elegant flowing lines, draws the reader in, trance like in mood/feel. Powerful conclusion.....”We do not wear them long, these skins,..”

### 1<sup>st</sup> Place

‘Persephone’ by Jo Mills : excellent language, clear form, intimate, speaks off the page, purposeful and emotionally charged. Excellent use of rhythm....”remember Persephone days spent ransacking/ the sounds caught in our body warmth/”

### Youth Category

#### Commended

1. ‘The Manderley’ by Jordan Webber (16): excellent use of form, well planned.
2. ‘Resurface’ by Madeleine Quy (17): innovative in structure, speaks off the page very well, strong narrative flow.
3. ‘Divinity’ by Caroline Gale (17): concise use of form, excellent diction, the voice of the poem very strong.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

‘Darkness’ by Ben Luo (16): excellent flow, a poem that wants to be read, very good use of rhythm, striking imagery...”the moon has shunned it / the stars have fled”

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize

‘Stream of Nothingness’ by Emily Peterson (11): very emotive, excellent choice of language, enjambment works very well. Imagery worked into the poem beautifully....”With the winds a cry so deadly”.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Prize

‘Worm’ by Daena Ho (15): excellent use of diction, generates a flow, a tidal pull, a poem that wants to be told and listened to. Striking images....”the hand in pitiless detail”. Written with a real ear for poetic purpose and possibility.

Karen W Treanor Encouragement Award for Under 13s : ‘Butterfly’ by Stirling Kaine. Excellent use of imagery and diction. Well structured. Flows very well and maintains reader interest.