

YOUNG AUSTRALIAN WRITERS



2002



AWARD 2002

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PATRON Mr Don Burke

Selection Committee:

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Publisher: Robin Leonard
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Australian Catholic University

Illustrations

by Laurie McMurray

Born in 1945, and raised in Western Victoria to a soldier settlement family, Laurie has been practising his art for all his life. His first state award was at 11 years of age, for his pen and ink study of a wedge tailed eagle for the Gould League Prize, while attending the Lake Bolac State School (Victoria).

Since those early years, Laurie, after having completed Matriculation at Lake Bolac High School (and consequently studying at Bendigo Institute of Technology, R.M.I.T. and other institutions), has expanded his artistic repertoire to encompass most mediums and subject matters (from abstraction to traditional realism). He specializes in portraits, nudes and figurative works, in oils and pastels, as well as still accepting many commissions in pen and ink. He is also working on a large (2.3 x 1.5m) canvas of singer Colleen Hewett for submission in the next Archibald Prize Competition.

Artworks by Laurie, both original and reproduced print form, are now in every State of Australia and approximately 30 countries overseas.

He operates from McMurray Galleries and fine Art Studios in the View Street Arts Precinct of Bendigo, Victoria.

Proudly printed in Australia

Young Australian Writers 2004



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following sponsors for their vision and support of our young Australian writers for, without them, this book and these awards would not have been possible.

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A Word from the Sponsor

It is a fact of commercial life that companies involving themselves in sponsorship, like to be associated with activities which are popular, successful and have the potential for further improvement.

That the *Young Australian Writers Awards* fulfil all of those criteria (from Bic Australia's point of view) is clearly evident by our continued support.

We, as major sponsors, have been delighted with the consistently high standards of our young contributors.

The Bic Australia *Young Australian Writers Award* will attain an enviable reputation and become an honour to which young writers will aspire. A status due, in no small measure, to the tireless efforts of the selection committee of *Oz Kidz In Print*, and the astute decisions of the Finals Judge.

Bic Australia is proud to be a supporter of the *Young Australian Writers Award*, and *Oz Kidz In Print*.

Dennis Mahoney
Marketing Manager,
BIC AUSTRALIA

Note from the Selection Committee

Congratulations to all the very talented young writers whose work is published in this book. The *Young Australian Writers Award* evolved from a magazine called *Oz Kidz In Print*. This magazine was first produced with the sole purpose of promoting young Australian writers in a context in which they could be honoured and their achievements distributed nationally to schools and libraries.

Both teachers and students alike have welcomed *Oz Kidz In Print*, 'with open arms' as a long-awaited forum. This huge response has now demanded that these awards be presented in a delightfully compiled anthology.

Should this increase continue as we expect, it will necessitate the expansion of both the selection committee and the judging panel. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the judge and the selection committee for their commitment and personal interest in the *Young Australian Writers Awards*. The task facing the committee becomes more challenging each year, but we are continually rewarded by the outstanding quality of work produced by the young writers. The generous sponsorship of Bic Australia and our other sponsors is essential for our success. We appreciate their interest and look forward to their continued support.

Rob Leonard
Chairperson,
The Selection Committee

FOREWORD

Writing is its own reward. Its devotees experience the loneliness and solitude that go with writing. Sometimes it is important to start with realistic expectations, for, in the words of Alfred Whitehead, 'A man really writes for an audience of about ten persons. Of course if others like it, that is clear gain. But if those ten are satisfied, he is content'.

Many ignorant folk may dismiss writing summarily as a dog's life. If writing is a dog's life, it is the only life worth living.

Yes, writing is a solitary occupation – one in which even family, friends and society are the natural enemies of the writer. 'He must be alone, uninterrupted and slightly savage if he is to sustain and complete an under-taking' (L Powell).

Our young writers in this album are to be commended; for it is they who have demonstrated the fortitude to bare their soul as would a sensitive person plunging naked into tropical waters where sharks abound. Yet it is they who achieve the euphoric satisfaction when the creations are complete.

Few people will experience the sense of satisfaction that engulfs our young writers for, in the words of Ann Lindberg, 'What release to write so that one forgets oneself, forgets one's companion, forgets where one is or what one is going to do next – to be drenched in work as one is drenched in sleep or in the sea...'

Our many contributors have exhibited these qualities to varying degrees, they have pressed on undaunted and unrelenting in pursuit of their craft, forging their own individualistic style. In the words of C.J.Dennis 'I dips me lid to you'.

Never ever become blasé about your gift and continue to exercise your talent to further enhance the natural skills with which you have been blessed.

Noel Butterfield
Editor

ABOUT THE JUDGE

Assoc. Prof. Margot Hillel OAM

Associate Professor Margot Hillel OAM is a Senior Lecturer in English in the School of Arts and Sciences, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne. She is a Past President of the Children's Book Council of Australia and was Convenor of the Second C.B.C. National Conference held in Melbourne in 1994. She has been President of the Victorian branch of the C.B.C., Judge of the Crichton Award for New Illustrators and Judge of the CBCA Book of the Year Awards. She writes and reviews for *Magpies*, *Reading Time*, *Classroom* and *Australian Book Review*. She has co-edited three short story collections (*Dream Time*, *Into the Future* and *Goodbye and Hello*, the latter being a collection of Australian and Irish stories, jointly published in Australia and the U.K.). She has co-written several books on using literature with children, including *Choosing and Using Literature* and *Unlocking Ideas* on using picture books to teach philosophy. With Anne Hanzl, she compiled *Celebrate!*, a retrospective anthology published to celebrate fifty years of the CBCA Children's Book of the Year Awards. She is a regular contributor to radio on children's books.

Margot speaks regularly at Conferences on children's literature, both in Australia and overseas and gives frequent 'in-services' to teachers on the use of children's literature. She has been exchange scholar in children's literature at The University of Waikato, New Zealand and, in 1966, undertook a three-week lecture tour of South Africa. She is Secretary of the newly-formed Australian Children's Literature Association for Research (ACLAR) and a member of the International Research Society for Children's Literature (IRSCL). She is currently convenor of the judging panel for the Young Adult award in the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards.

We are delighted to have such a celebrated expert in Children's Literature as our Chief Judge for the Australian Children's Literary Board.



The 2004
BIC AUSTRALIA
Young Writer of
the Year Award

— WINNER —

Andrea Ali

Loreto College
Marryatville,
South Australia

SPECIAL AWARDS

The Special Awards listed below are from community aware Companies who are supporting our *Young Australian Writer Awards* (along with the Major Sponsor **Bic Australia**). Without this support, these awards would not be possible.

The Bic Australia Achievement Award

This Award is presented to a student as an encouragement award.

The ASG Literary Award – Short Story Category

This Award is presented to a student for short story writing.

The ASG Literary Award – Poetry Category

This Award is presented to a student for poetry writing.

The Hazel Edwards Literary Award

This Award is presented to a student attending a Secondary School from within Australia and whose work has been judged the best piece of writing for a **Short Story**.

The Telematics Trust Literary Award

This Award is presented to a student attending a Secondary School from within Australia and whose work has been judged the best piece of **Poetry Writing**.

The Dymocks Literary Award

This Award is presented to a student attending a Primary School from within Australia and whose work has been judged the best piece of writing for a **Short Story**.

The Qantas Flight Catering Literary Award

This Award is presented to a student attending a Primary School from within Australia and whose work has been judged the best piece of **Poetry Writing**.

The Don Burke Achievement Award

This Award is presented to a student attending whose work has been judged as outstanding.

**THE
BIC AUSTRALIA
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

— WINNER —

Katrina Hall

**Geebung
State School
Geebung, Queensland**

THE LEGEND OF THE SELKIES

Running silently through the rainforest she came to a sudden stop. She wasn't a human, but she wasn't a monster either. Raising her round sky blue eyes towards the sun, she ran again. Reaching the river she stopped, and made a strange unearthly sound, as if she was calling to something. The leaves rustled as though they were replying to the strange noise. Straining her ears to hear if anything was following, she heard footsteps that caused her to panic. She knew by the heavy steps that they belonged to the collector that had nearly caught her the day before. Making no sound she dived into the water. She swam across and hid in the reeds.

The collector skidded to a stop at the edge of the water. He had heard a legend that in this forest there were creatures called Selkies. He was hoping that he could catch one and sell its skin. He turned around and walked back home, hopeful that he would have better luck tomorrow. Watching him till he was out of sight, the creature swam out from behind the reeds to the shore. She ran quickly to the centre of the forest where her herd was. Reaching the centre of the forest, she was among her own kind. As the collector had guessed she was a Selkie. She was the only sibling of the leader of the legendary Selkie and her mane was Silk. A Selkie is a seal that can turn into a human if touched by cold steel or if it sheds its skin. At the next full moon, she would shed her skin and perform the 'Dance of Peace'.

The night of the full moon had arrived. Shedding her sealskin, she danced. Halfway through there was a disturbance, the collector had arrived with reinforcement. As soon as he saw her dancing for the herd he knew that she was a Selkie. The rest of the herd was captured. The collector lunged for the sealskin but the prancing Selkie grabbed it first and quickly slipped into it. She attacked the collector with her teeth bared and ripped his leg. A person holding a gun, shot a dart at her. Blackness befell her.

Regaining consciousness, she was in a tank separated from the other Selkies. Calling out to her own kind, she didn't hear them respond. She thumped the tank three, four, five times, until she broke out. The people who had captured her and her fellow Selkies came running, but she knocked them out of her way. The collector came with a gun, preparing to fire. She lunged at him as she took the shot. The fatal wound exposed her heart. The other Selkies watched in horror, Silk died. They knew there was no hope.



*By Katrina Hall (ASG), Grade 7 – Age 12
Geebung State School, GEEBUNG – QLD.
Teacher: Mr. Bertrend*

**THE ASG
LITERARY AWARD**

Short Story Category

— WINNER —

Sarah Tan

**Our Lady Of Mercy
College
Heidelberg, Victoria**

THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

The lady at the counter glared at me as I crunched on my juicy apple. She pointed directly at a sign. Sure enough in big, black, bold letters were the words 'EATING IN THE MUSEUM IS FORBIDDEN!'. I moaned and headed towards the bin to throw my apple away. As I approached, I saw a flickering light shining from the bin. I reached into the bin and to my surprise took out a golden key. I looked around for the lady at the counter to hand over the key. There was no sign of her. In fact there was no sign of anybody! The museum looked absolutely deserted! I thought it was quite weird, as it seemed like everyone had vanished into thin air! The place began to spook me out so I turned and headed for the exit door.

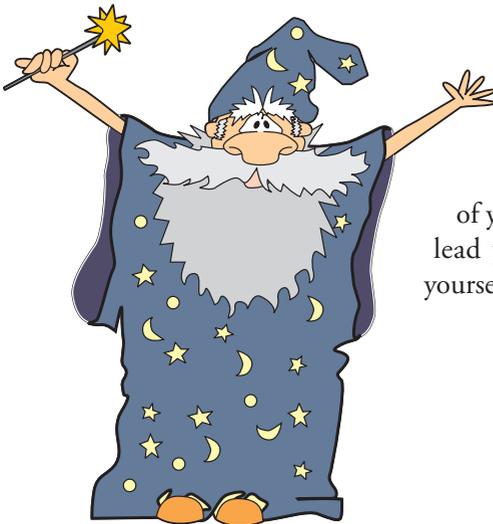
Suddenly a great whirl of wind emerged from nowhere and surrounded me and then carried me away. My heart started thumping, my legs began to shake as I frantically bit my nails in shock. After a while, the whirl of wind died down and left me crashing to the ground. I got up and shook my head to make sure I wasn't having one of those freaky dreams. I was really confused and felt strange. In front of me was a wooden door. I tried opening it, thinking it was a way out but unfortunately it was locked. While stamping my feet in frustration I felt something fall out of my pocket. I bent down and picked up the golden key I had found earlier. Then a slip of paper floated towards me. I stared at it for a while then decided to pick it up and open it. 'The key of all hopes and dreams can open the door to harmony', I read. I thought for a moment, then held up the key and pushed it through the keyhole. The door squeaked open and I slowly edged towards it.

I looked at it in amazement as I saw all types of mystical creatures happily getting on with their daily lives. The world looked just like a splitting description from a fantasy story. There was absolutely everything here! The place was too good to be true! As I was walking down the lane I bumped into an elf. We exchanged greetings and asked questions about each other's worlds. Suddenly the elf waved his hands in front of my face. I stopped and looked at him. 'You must never come back here again for doom is to come in', he whispered. I was puzzled. 'How could doom come to such a wonderful place like this?', I wondered as I put the key back into my pocket.

There was a sudden jolt and darkness filled the sky. Everything that this beautiful world had was replaced by barren land. Even the moods of each of the creatures had changed.

Their bright clean clothes had turned into dull, dirty rags. Then I realised, all these mystical creatures were slaves. Now I began to understand, this place was doomed all along, but why? The elf explained to me that once it was said that this world was full of hopes and wonders until their treasure had disappeared. The treasure gave this world hope and let every creature have a dream, a dream that would make them realise the true meaning of peace, happiness and love rather than money and gifts. But when the treasure disappeared the wonderful people and features were no more. After that, a great, evil wizard found out about this and decided to take over the world. I asked if there was any way I could help. The elf said there was only one way I could help. If I could find the treasure and give it to the human who tried to commit the act of honesty.

I felt helpless wondering how I could help. I thought of the key. I asked the elf if I could find the rightful owner of this key. As soon as I did this, this world turned back to its beautiful self. I finally figured it out! The golden key was the treasure. When I found it in the bin I didn't think twice about keeping the key but instead looked for the lady at the counter to hand it over. What do you call that? The act of honesty! So as soon as I picked it up the whirl of wind took me to this beautiful place. But the world's elegance was no more when I put the key back into my pocket. This explained what that note meant. It meant that the key I found had all the hopes and dreams of the creatures in this world and would help them live in harmony once again. I explained what I had figured out to the elf and watched as his eyes lit up with glee and a huge grin appeared on his chubby face.



In the end I left the mystical place and the evil wizard was defeated by the great powers of the key. From now on I have always carried the key in my hand no matter what! I have learnt that the power of your heart and mind is very strong and can lead you to doing very rewarding things for yourself as well as for others.

By Sarah Tan (ASG)

Age 13

Our Lady Of Mercy College

HEIDELBERG – VIC.

**THE DYMOCKS
LITERARY AWARD**

**Primary School
Short Story Award**

— WINNER —

Beth Goodsell

**Sale Primary School
Sale, Victoria**

THE CREEK

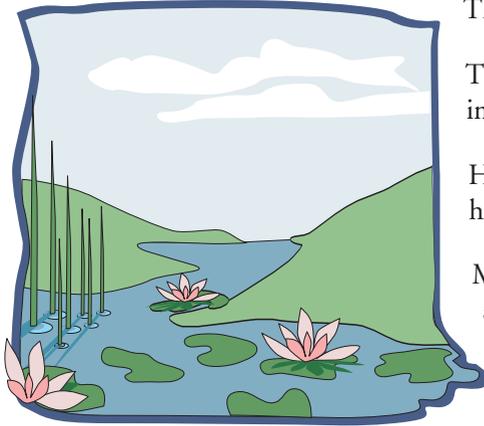
I've heard these stories about a creek, but I'm not sure if they're true. People have told me how spooky it is, and that nobody ever goes down there.

I love writing stories, and I thought that this creek would be just the thing to write about. I got up my nerve, packed my writing gear and off I went, down to the creek.

While travelling down there, I started thinking that maybe these stories were true. It grew rather cold. There was no sunlight, not even a glimpse of colour. Without realising it, I seemed to have entered a rather gloomy forest!

I saw a sign saying 'BEWARE OF THE CREEK'. My skin began tingling. I felt as if I should go back but I knew I wouldn't. I really wanted to see this creek. I wanted to discover whether these stories were true. So I continued to follow the path overgrown with tangled and twisted branches. It seemed to go on for ages until suddenly it came to a dead end. Right in front of me was a huge hedge. How strange, I thought, to find such a healthy green bush amongst this forest of dead trees. I started to feel around the bush, when I hit something hard at the bottom of the hedge.

I began to pull away at the leaves, uncovering what looked like a rusted tiny metal door. Hanging next to the door was an old fashioned key. I slipped the key into the lock and pushed nervously against the door. Slowly it squeaked its way open. Taking a deep breath I squeezed through the door wondering what lay ahead.



That's when I saw it.

The *spookiest* creek anyone could possibly imagine – NOT! It was beautiful.

How could this beautiful place cause such horrible rumours?

Millions of flowers of all different colours surrounded a bright blue creek, clearer than a mirror. Right in the middle was an island covered in luscious green, covered in trees and ferns.

Beautiful white doves were flying over the water. The sun, as bright as ever, reflected off the water and shone straight at a tree.

I began to look at this tree. It wasn't like any other tree I'd ever seen. There was something enchanted about it. Light seemed to glow from all around this magnificent tree.

I felt drawn towards the tree. Climbed the branches right up to the top, and there before me was a place I had never seen or heard of.

A small elf-like creature came up to me and said 'I am king, King Blop. We are known as blossoms, just like you are humans'.

'Hello', I quivered, 'Could you please tell me where I am?'.

'Welcome to Mystical Creek!' the king replied.

This was SO strange. 'Why does such a beautiful place have so many dreadful stories about it?' I asked.

'We have done that to stop humans from coming here and spoiling our peace. I have disguised myself as a man and told tales of how horrible the creek at the bottom of the forest really is. You are the first person brave enough to walk deep into Deadly Forest. Because of your bravery we shall make you an honorary Blossom and you will be welcome here any time.'

How wonderful I thought – Blossom Beth!

'However', the king continued, 'You must promise to NEVER tell anyone what you have discovered'. Thanking the king for his generosity I returned home with thousands of thoughts spinning round in my mind.

A year later the best selling novel was a story called 'Mystical Creek' by Blossom Beth. No one had ever heard of the author but she soon became well known for her series of books about an enchanted land.

*By Beth Goodsell
Grade 5, Sale Primary School
SALE – VIC.*

**THE ASG
LITERARY AWARD**

Poetry Category

— WINNER —

Harry John Eason

**Jamieson Primary
Mt. Jamieson, Victoria**

PLATYPUS

I went down to the river,
A cold winter's day.
Third year in a row,
Our pump washed away.

Shivering in waders,
My father bad-tempered,
A rope round his chest
That I must not let go.

'My fingers are freezing!
But it's there, I can feel it
Though it won't bloody budge
From the willows and crap.'

Don't shout at me,
I haven't done anything.
I want to get out of here,
When you start getting cross.

A splash and some bubbles,
In a strange patch of sunlight.
Some peculiar bark
Up-ended and vanished.

'There, there, right beside you!
Clearer than daylight!
Platypus! platypus!
I screamed at my Dad.

But he didn't believe me,
Just glanced around carelessly.
Missing a sight
Of this wonderful beast.

It swam around cautiously,
Bobbing and floating,
Inspecting my father
Like he was from Mars.

Its sleek velvet fur coat
Shone in the sunlight.
This beautiful creature
Cried out to my heart.

With its wet leather duckbill,
And black plastic web-feet,
Old as the dinosaurs,
Were those bright beady eyes.

'Dad, Dad, right by you!
I wanted to hold it,
And pet it, and stroke it,
And make it my friend.

But up came the pump
And scared off my platypus,
And I haven't seen him
From that day to this.

And often I've heard Dad,
When his mates come around,
Say: 'We've got a platypus
My son reckons he's found.'



By *Harry John Eason (ASG)*
Grade 6 – Age 11
Jamieson Primary School
JAMIESON – VIC

**THE HAZEL EDWARDS
LITERARY AWARD**

**Secondary Short Story
Award**

— WINNER —

Kate Vanrenen

**Koonung
Secondary College
Mont Albert, Victoria**

IT HAS A NAME THAT INSPIRES MAGICAL INCLINATIONS

I drew my inspiration from legends and mythical beings. I wanted to display the importance of legends, stories and fairy tales and to show that they are not so easily dismissed. To really emphasise the importance of the legend in my story I kept bringing extracts back into the text, including them to help the reader connect the legend and the real occurrence. I wrote this for teenagers, especially those who have never believed in something unusual like fairies, unicorns or celestial stags.

'...the tragic beasts live underground in our mines and desire nothing more than to reach the light of day. They have the power of speech and implore us to help them to the surface. At first, he attempts to bribe the workman with the promise of revealing hidden veins of silver, but when this gambit fails, the beast becomes troublesome and we are forced to overpower it and wall the thing up in one of the mine galleries. It is rumoured, that the ones of us who are found unawares and are outnumbered by them, have been tortured to death. But God forbid it should find its way to the surface...'

My father was the rugged mountain type. A long bushy beard adorned his face, he had strong calloused hands and, of course, infinite mountain wisdom. He revelled in the use of his hands. In my every memory he is carving a fine piece of wood, or working metal or, more often than not, fashioning silver. My father made art out of anything he touched.

He was also a miner, but not just any miner, my father was the bravest kind of all. He mined silver. And with those mining rites come legends, tales and consequences. The consequences are what I think haunted him most of all.

Yet, I can honestly claim that nothing on this world scared him. He was a man of steel nerves; things that stabbed in the dark, savaged and killed were of no threat to him. Not even death itself. His fears lay where the things not of this world were concerned.

All miners fear mining too deep or too close to something that should not exist at all, let alone be awoken. They fear mining too much silver, because success eventuates in legends of greed and betrayal. But, more than this, they fear finding too little silver, for there are tales that prophesise great repercussions for this too.

Young Australian Writers

But the thing a miner fears above all else is finding nothing...

In a silver mine deeply embedded in the mountains my father reigned supreme. He was leader and father combined to all the miners in his team. He had overcome many obstacles for this mine, it was to be his greatest success. As yet they had mined nothing, but all the indications and fancy gadgets he employed indicated that the time had come. Mere metres away was the greatest and most glorious silver vein in the history of our modern age.

Nothing. When all scientific information points to an abundant silver mine all is hopeful. But for months and months nothing is mined. Who or what can be blamed for such bad luck? Doubt begins to breed in the workmen's minds. And with this doubt breeds desperation. And with desperation comes anger. Where is their silver, where is their livelihood? And with all this breeding no one notices a weightless mist descending around the mine. It sparkles with silver and hints at fortune, but even the beauty and promises cannot distract from the sense of foreboding that enfolds the mining camp.

Deep down the miners know it. And soon they will admit it even to themselves. Superstition proclaims that the worst is coming. For the first time this decree has a name and it whispers in their minds, slowly driving them to insanity. The Celestial Stag.



One night, I walked to the mine to meet my father under the light of the moon. As I neared the camp I found myself wandering blindly for such a thick mist surrounded me. I could barely see in front of my eyes when I heard a sound I couldn't quite recognise. I stood, frozen to the ground, while the sound approached. Faster and faster it came, all the while growing louder until it sounded strangely like the clapping of thunder all around me, completely and utterly overwhelming the forest atmosphere. It was almost upon me when I acted. In a flight of panic I threw myself to the ground and huddled in a little ball, waiting for the inevitable. They came stampeding in a herd of what seemed like hundreds. The instant they came I knew the sound I had heard was hooves. Hundreds and hundreds of hooves galloping as one. I looked out from my little ball as they were streaming past and saw many furry bodies race by. They had massive antlers protruding from their heads, their physical

strength and glory obvious as they lengthened their legs and fastened the pace, eating up the ground. Flanks heaving and legs pumping they propelled into the distance and were gone...

It occurred to me later that I had been thoroughly unafraid while I was in the midst of the stampede. Because surely I should be dead, trampled to death. Yet I had sensed no danger at all to my person.

My father found me sitting in a heap in the dirt some time later. My experience burst from my lips and as I relayed my story to him I again felt the adrenalin and heard the pounding of hooves deep in the earth.

My father's reaction startled me immensely. At first he looked at me strangely and then with intense worry. Swiftly he scooped me up and onto his shoulders. 'Look around', he whispered ever so quietly.

I did and to my horror I saw what one expects to see in a mining camp. Normality. Everything was as it should be. But more importantly I saw not a print, no sign of hooves. No indication at all that what I had seen had been real. Only my sense was that something magical had taken place yet even that was quickly receding into memory.

My father prepared to walk away. But as we left the camp a rumbling animal call started to reverberate around us. The sound built and built until it became so loud and, at the same time, so painful. But the pain lay in the sadness of the animal call. It was pleading with all who would listen for escape, for release. And as the call began to fade it became obvious where it had come from. Not from the surrounding forest. But from deep beneath the earth. It came from inside the mine.

'...and implore us to help them to the surface.'

What proceeded next brings me great sadness. To all those involved with the mine it became more and more imminent that their dreams were lost along with the silver. The next time I went to see my father at the mining camp he caught me before I arrived at the entrance of the mine. But not before I saw men carrying out the still body of a miner I knew to be a friendly, young man with mischievous green eyes that sparkled when he laughed. This procession was followed by a body, a man who was clearly alive and

fighting his hardest to escape the grip of the miners who held him. I began to look away, frightened, as he yelled something at the top of his lungs while looking directly at me.

‘HE PROMISED! WITH THE VOICE OF AN ANGEL, I SWEAR IT! HE PROMISED THE SILVER. HE CHOSE ME. HE PROMISED IT TO ME. YOU CAN’T HAVE IT!’

With desperation comes anger. I really had no idea what he was saying, no idea of the meaning. But as my father carried me out of the camp we passed a worn and patched tent that reeked with the stench of death. A strong wind blew the flap open and for a second I saw miners gathered in the tent. A large number of men, just huddling in the tent. But there was something wrong. They were covered thickly in blood and they weren’t moving.

‘...he attempts to bribe the workman with the promise of revealing hidden veins of silver.’

My father had told me not to come and visit him that day. He made me promise. But at lunchtime I was so happy that I had figured it all out. All that was happening was just like a story my father had once told me. Everything he had said would happen in this story had taken place, yet even more. I wanted to tell him that I knew what was going to happen next, so I set off as fast as I could towards the mining camp. Through the forest I went, looking up at the trees and thinking how silvery and shiny they looked in the bright afternoon sun.

When I arrived all was deathly quiet.

‘...we are forced to overpower it...’

I settled myself at the entrance to the mine to wait for my father to surface. And he did, but he was not alone.

I heard a great call and looked up just in time to see a great stag emerge from the mine. I knew at once this was the beast that had stampeded by me that night. As it sprang into the open I noticed something clinging to its back. It was my father. I sprung to my feet and was calling him to me when the stag galloped into the open where the direct rays of the warm sun shone upon it. All at once the magnificent stag gave a great anguished call of pain and dissolved in front of my very eyes. I watched, terrified, as my father glanced

back at me with a look of love and regret all at once, before being immersed in the stinking liquid the stag had morphed into.

At first I was not sure if what I had seen was real. What if it was like the stampede, a mere illusion? I walked to the liquid puddle and saw the deaths of men that I knew. Over and over their crying faces flashed before my eyes. And I saw the hoof marks surrounding the puddle of stench, proclaiming my father's death as real. I heard quick footsteps from inside the mine and male voices shouting. And I ran.

I ran with a child's broken heart away from the mining camp and into the forest. Although it was afternoon it became terribly dark all of a sudden. But I kept running until I collapsed with exhaustion and thirst. I cried into the pine needles that lined the forest floor, sobbing for myself and for the father who was now gone.

'But God forbid it find its way to the surface... Legend has it that if the Celestial Stag finds its way into the open air, it becomes a foul smelling liquid that breeds death and pestilence.'

Never has a name been so misleading as the 'Celestial Stag'.

*By Kate Vanrenen
Year 9
Koonung
Secondary College
MONT ALBERT – VIC*



**THE TELEMATICS TRUST
LITERARY AWARD**

**Secondary School
Poetry Award**

— WINNER —

Andrea Ali

**Loreto College
Marryatville, South Australia**

FLOWERS OF LIFE

A girl sits by a window,
 Staring through the glass,
 At the little garden,
 Which is a reminder of the past.
 Flowers used to grow there,
 As beautiful as could be,
 But now the ground has grown so cold,
 There are no flowers to see.
 They withered and disappeared,
 When the young girl lost her soul,
 When depression began to creep in,
 And sadness took its toll.
 The young girl was an orphan,
 Parents killed a few months ago,
 She never knew it would happen,
 Now her life has begun to slow.
 Like a flower, she once blossomed,
 Always happy and carefree,
 Dancing through each day,
 There was no place she'd rather be.
 Always singing a song,
 That no one else could hear,
 No worries and no heartache,
 And nothing at all to fear.
 The flowers grew and grew,
 Reaching up to the sky,
 Until all of a sudden she changed,
 And the flowers began to die.
 The girl no longer grew,
 The garden became a desolate place,
 The girl's heart had been broken in two.
 For months and months the girl sat still,
 Thinking of the past,
 Remembering all her hopes and dreams,

And the flowers that never did last.
 Then she began to realise,
 That although she won't forget the pain,
 She could learn to let go of her hurt,
 And then to start living again.
 Her memories will never leave her,
 They'll always be in her heart,
 And as long as she keeps remembering,
 Her parents will never depart.
 A smile creeps over her face,
 She loves her parents and they know,
 And outside in the little garden,
 A flower begins to grow.

By Andrea Ali
Year 11 – Age 16
Loreto College
MARRYATVILLE – SA



**THE QANTAS
FLIGHT CATERING
LITERARY AWARD**

**Primary School
Poetry Award**

— WINNER —

Aarish Zaveri

**Southwood Boys'
Grammar School
Ringwood, Victoria**

THE TIDE

The tide is like time,
Gone before you can get your feet.
It's gone,
Before you can experience its ways.

It leaves behind rock pools,
Where little crabs scuttle and
Barnacles abound.
It looks like a garden of seaweed.

When the tide comes in,
Ships sail out. Sailing to unknown places
Also like the tide,
Gone in the blink of an eye.

The sea beats against the rocks,
On cold wintry days,
Washes away more with each wave.
The sea is like time never ending.

*By Aarish Zaveri
Year 3 – Age 9
Southwood Boys
Grammar School
RINGWOOD – VIC.*



**THE DON BURKE
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

— WINNER —

Christine M. Paiva

**Darwin High School
Darwin, Northern Territory**

I FIND PEACE

I find peace
 In the pearly mists of dawn, glimmering palely
 I find peace In the majestic call of the ocean
 Coloured purple, blue and silver
 Peace is
 Deep in the green hear of the forest
 Where the surrounding silence reigns
 I find peace
 In a white rose, lush and pure
 Peace is
 The sunset
 When gold and crimson pour from the heavens
 Peace is
 Lifting my eyes to the mountains
 Strongholds of ages past
 I find peace
 Watching a sleeping infant, innocence personified I find peace
 In the velvet of the night sky, with diamond stars

But peace does not exist
 Where hatred is burnt indelibly into the hearts of people
 Where children are given guns instead of toys
 Peace is drowned out
 In a sea of innocent blood spilt
 Staining the soil forever
 Killing the green bloom of love and goodness
 In helpless screams of terror
 In the racing heartbeats of people fighting to stay alive
 Peace cannot be found
 In the thought of men senselessly killing each other
 Of women, daughters and sons waiting in anguish
 Of the torturous massacre of thousands
 Of war

Continued on Page 36



**THE BIC AUSTRALIA
2004
YOUNG WRITER OF THE
YEAR AWARD**

— WINNER —

Andrea Ali

***Loreto College
Marryatville, South Australia***

LA VITA BELLA

We can never really know or understand how someone else sees the world. For Tarquin Scarlatti, the world was an enemy. Sixteen years old, 5 ft. 11 inches, naturally slim with muscle tone and the beginnings of a six pack, Tarquin was often described as handsome despite his circumstances. With his smooth olive skin, dark brown almond eyes framed by long lush eyelashes, chiselled jawbone, semi broad shoulders and tousled dark brown hair, he stood out from the crowd. Tarquin was a person people noticed, but for the wrong reasons. He was an outcast, a loner. Tarquin was a street kid.

Leaning against a rough brick wall which supported a building in the heart of New York City, Tarquin watched the people walk past. His eyes followed business men and women, dressed to impress, struggling with their bulging briefcases or frantically pushing buttons on their cellular phones. Some of them would gaze in his direction and when they did, he could almost read their thoughts. His baggy jeans, scruffy shoes, oversized, wrinkled tee shirt and worn black jacket were no match for their designer outfits with matching leather shoes. Still, whenever eyes wandered in his direction, Tarquin stared right back, never breaking eye contact, as if staring right through to the person's soul. They would slightly shake their heads, their expressions disgusted, their lips pursed in disapproval. Tarquin scowled and tilted his head, stretching, before disappearing down a side street.

Walking quickly with his hands in his pockets, he travelled back to where he lived, a footpath which he had covered for shelter, down a narrow alley. Taking his jacket off and sitting down on it, Tarquin began to wonder how other people really did view him. He was a good listener, to whoever bothered to speak to him but did not trust anyone. He had been called desensitised by members of gangs, due to his withdrawn nature and tough exterior. Although Tarquin was seen as a threat to the other street kids, he was also seen as different. They believed he did not belong there, did not belong with them and deep in his heart, Tarquin believed that as well. He believed he was different, he hoped he was different because that was all that he had to hold on to, all that he had to defend himself when he was dismissed as 'just another street kid'. Tarquin wasn't, he knew he wasn't but he didn't know what made him different. Sure, he had a good heart and was always willing to risk his life for a younger child but he secretly disliked the person he had become. He was jealous, insanely jealous of happy families, mothers and their children laughing down the streets, for that was something he barely had a chance to experience.

Tarquin sighed and reached to his neck, running his finger over the silver cross which hung on a fine chain, unaware that he was doing so. He traced the cross, acknowledging its presence and allowed his mind to wander back to when he had received it. He muttered 'La vita bella' softly, meaning life is beautiful. Tarquin didn't believe a word of it but said it because the phrase had been said the day he received the cross. He had been brought up as a Christian but stopped believing in God. He wore it because it was a link back to his childhood. It had been a present, from his mother who he had loved and hated at the same time.

Tarquin grew up in Illinois and was of Spanish and Italian origin and lived with his father, Carlos, his mother, Sandra and his younger brother, Darian. Life was good at that time but that soon changed. Tarquin blinked, reliving the pain of the past few years as if it were only yesterday. He could see it all so clearly. He had argued with his brother, called him names and in a fit of complete rage, informed him that he hated him. His father had come in, upset by the sounds of tears and joined in the argument. Tarquin had lost all patience and serenity by this time and once again yelled 'I hate you!!'. His father and Darian left the room without saying a word. That was the last time Tarquin ever saw them. An hour later, his father lost control of the car and skidded into a tree, the impact killed him and Darian instantly. Tarquin never got to say he was sorry.

After the death of his father and brother, Sandra remarried, to a man named Bruce and they moved to an apartment in New York. Bruce treated Tarquin with malice and hostility, often beating him for no reason and forcing him to sleep outside. He was pulled out of school at the age of fourteen and forced to work hard labour. Tarquin often tried to turn to his mother for comfort but she was no help. Since that painful day, Sandra had been in her own world. She became heavily hooked on drugs and later died of a drug overdose. Soon after that, Tarquin was living on the streets.

He stood up, blinking away tears that threatened to fall and once again, hiding within his tough exterior, walked along the streets and headed for Vinnie's Diner, a place he knew he could steal a quick lunch. He darted through the open gates of the school he passed every day, striding across the tennis court and past the classrooms. This was his short cut and he never paid much attention to the school grounds. Today, he did. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed an open door, which was always shut whenever he had passed it. He shuffled closer and realised that it must have been a music room, for in the middle of the room sat a beautiful black grand piano. He inhaled quickly, scanned the area for any movement and walked inside. Sitting down on the seat, Tarquin ran his

long slender fingers over the glossy black and white notes and closed his eyes. He had a passion for music and had wanted to learn the piano but now it seemed like he would never have a chance. A sound behind him caused him to open his eyes with a start.

'May I help you?' came the soft feminine voice behind him. Tarquin leaped off the seat. 'I wasn't doin' anythin' honest! I just sat down.'

The woman stood beside him and chuckled softly, 'No that's quite all right, sit down. I didn't mean to startle you'.

Tarquin sat down and stared at his lap.

'Do you play?' the woman asked, after a few moments of silence.

'No but I've always wanted to.'

Tarquin turned to face her and found that she was at least in her sixties, a small slight woman with a friendly, open face. 'Well here then', she smiled and pulled a chair close to the piano stool.

'Let me teach you a scale.' Tarquin couldn't believe it; this complete stranger was offering to help him! He obeyed and watched her fingers, then slowly and deliberately, he copied her movements.

'Very good!' The woman was impressed. 'My name is Denise, and you are...?'

'Tarquin, my name is Tarquin', he replied, feeling a little uncomfortable.

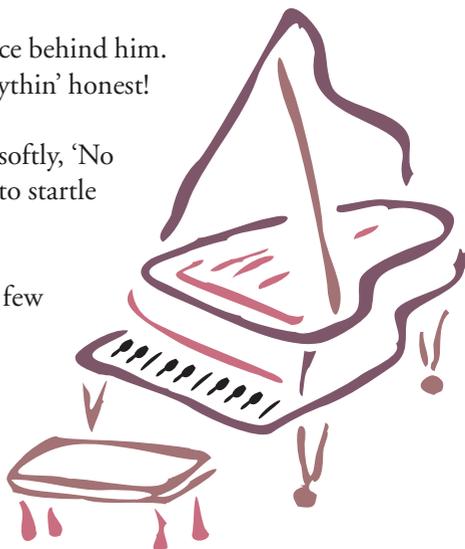
'Well, Tarquin, would you like to learn the piano? I am very willing to teach you, you have a rare talent', Denise said and studied his face.

'Oh no, I can't pay you', Tarquin shook his head and gazed longingly at the piano.

The feeling of his fingers floating over the keys made him happy, relaxed and free but how could he pay for the teaching?

Denise saw the look of disappointment and slight anguish on his face and said gently, 'That doesn't matter Tarquin, I will teach you anyway.'

His face lit up, his eyes danced and she felt a warm sensation in her heart. This boy, this strange boy was obviously homeless, judging by his appearance and character but possessed a remarkable love for the instrument. He played the scale perfectly and his hands, beautiful piano hands. Denise knew that he was different.



‘Well I have some time now, why don’t we start?’ she said brightly and pulled out a beginner’s book from off a shelf.

Tarquin could hardly contain his excitement; he was going to learn the piano! It was what he always wanted, what he had dreamed of since he was young and this stranger had offered him kindness and compassion. He felt tears well in his eyes and whispered, in a voice filled with sincerity ‘La vita bella’, before reaching out and striking the first note.

*By Andrea Ali
Year 11 – Age 16
Loreto College
MARRYATVILLE – SA*

I FIND PEACE

Continued from Page 31

But peace can be found
In the hope that humanity can live in harmony
In knowing that each person in this world had no reason to fear for his or her life
In knowing that all weapons had been laid down
In knowing all countries are willing to help each other
In knowing we are striving for a better existence for everyone
That we are a united people

I find peace
In the hope of world peace.



*By Christine Mary Paiva (ASG)
Grade 11 – Age 16
Darwin High School
DARWIN – NT*

