

YOUNG  
AUSTRALIAN  
WRITERS



*2005*

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## First published 1999

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Head, School of Arts and Sciences  
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.

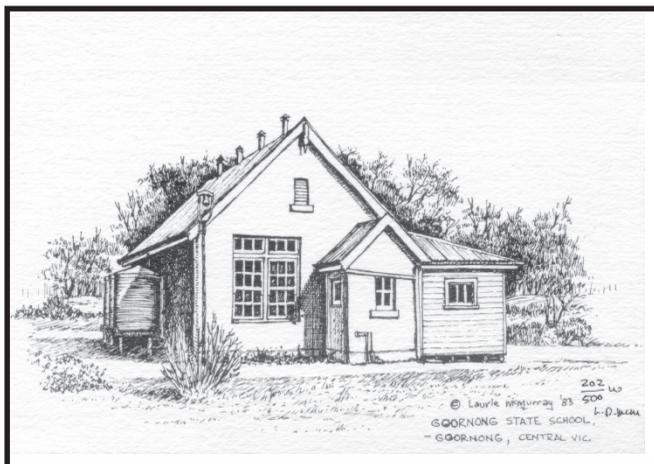
Artworks by Laurie, both original and reproduced print form, are now in every State of Australia and approximately 30 countries overseas.

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

*Proudly printed in Australia*

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# YOUNG AUSTRALIAN WRITERS



*2005*

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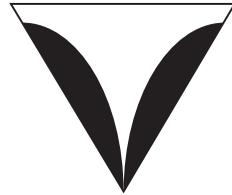
# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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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## 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

## 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



## Selection Committee's Message

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



**The 2005 BIC AUSTRALIA  
Young Australian  
Writer of the Year Award**

**— WINNER —**

*Lydia Dobbin*

**Methodist Ladies' College, Victoria**

## **SPECIAL AWARDS**

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

■ **The Bic Australia Young Australian Writer of the Year Award**  
Awarded to the best overall piece of writing.

■ **The Dymocks 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 Fred P. Archer Literary Award**

Awarded to the runner-up best **Short Story** from a Secondary School student

**■ The Bushells 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 Jack Brockhoff Foundation Literary Award**

Awarded to the runner-up best **Poetry** from a Secondary School student.

**■ The Qantas Flight Catering Achievement Award**

Awarded 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 Telematics Trust Literary Award**

Awarded to the runner-up best **Short Story** from a Primary School student.

**■ The Percy Baxter Trust Achievement Award**

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

**■ The GE Insurance Achievement Award**

Awarded to the runner-up best **Poetry** from a Primary School student.

**■ The Don Burke Literary Award**

Don Burke's Poetry Selection.

**■ The ASG Literary Award Best Poetry**

Presented to a student for Poetry Writing.

**■ The ASG Literary Award Best Short Story**

Presented to a student for Short Story writing.

**■ The Helen Handbury Literary Awards**

The 'Bright Kids Awards' for kids with learning difficulties.

**DYMOCKS**  
BOOKSELLERS

**THE DYMOCKS  
LITERARY AWARD**

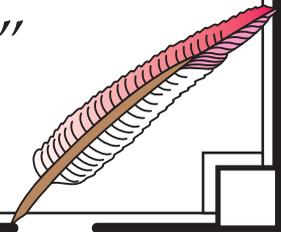
**Secondary School  
Short Story Category**

— WINNER —

*Lydia Dobbin*

Methodist Ladies' College, Kew, Vic.

*"Future Perfect"*



## FUTURE PERFECT

“He had been broken once before... when he was still half a boy, and he knew that when you were beaten properly, you didn’t get up; you had to wait for some obscure grace to put you together and there was no guarantee it would come by a second time”

— *Tim Winton*

“The first and best victory is to conquer self”

— *Plato*

*The alarm sounds in my ear, beep beep, beep beep... I lean over and turn it off. It seems so much earlier at this time of year when it’s still dark outside. There is a note under my door: Good luck Kiddo – love Dad. I stand by the frosted window. Wiping away some of the condensation I look down into the paddocks but can see only my reflection. I feel the chlorine before I even put on my bathers. My hair is dry, my skin bleached. My bathers feel damp as I pull them on but I tell myself it is just the cold. I realise how pilled my jumper has become since I started training seriously.*

It’s later than I thought. I pause in the hallway as I hear dad snoring in the big double bed. Alone. The familiar raw pain catches my throat but before it can escape I press my lips firmly together and tiptoe into the kitchen and close the door. Sammy’s tail thumps against the floor but she is too sleepy to get up.

“Come on lazy bones” *I say to her as I push open the door.*

“Out you go.” *Matteo rubs against me; I pour her some milk before looking through the cupboards for food for lunch. No muesli bars left. I grab some almonds and some of yesterday’s bread. I’m deciding between vegemite or jam when I hear the car door slam outside then gentle knocking.*

“Be right there” *I whisper. I throw my lunch into a plastic bag and grab my school stuff.*

As I make my way to the car the frosty grass nips my ankles. Inside the car it’s warm, Mary has the heater running.

“How are ya love?” *she asks, before flicking her cigarette out the window and starting the motor. I smell the familiar scent of hay and boot polish as we bump down the long driveway, the headlights dipping as we drive through deep ruts. Some of the cows have started grazing already, but it will be a few hours before the lambs are up.*

On the highway we pass Mr Kinnear trying to replace the tyre on his ute. It's too early for a problem like this and he looks tired. His kelpie barks excitedly from the tray of the ute as we speed past.

I check my school things to make sure I've put in my homework from last night; my history folder and French grammar books. I zip them into my school bag and chuck it in the back. My shoulder aches. I pull out some Dencorub and massage it into my shoulder.

"Pew that stuff stinks!" *Mary says, waving her hand at me.*

As we pull into town I notice a man sleeping on a bench. He is curled up, lying still with a sleeping bag pulled up tightly against the biting wind. He wears a faded Heineken beanie and I watch as steam comes out of his mouth. His little dog is trying to jump up onto the bench but it's too high. He circles and makes another attempt, but just misses. A Jack Russell I think, as I watch its tail wag excitedly. With a jolt I realise that the dog only has three legs. It tries several more times to jump onto the bench but fails. Finally, after a huge effort it jumps up and snuggles into the man. As we drive away the little dog looks up. I meet its eyes.

I rub my shoulder again and think of the day ahead. Time trials. My stomach knots as I think about all that hangs on my performance today. I try to make my mind think of other things, and curse for the millionth time the long car trip to the pool. There's too much time to think. Too much time to think of what it would be like if things had been different.

I wish dad could have come to watch me at the trials, but he needs to look after the twins in the mornings now. I remember all the freezing dawn starts when he would drive me to training.

"You're gonna make it Jules" *he'd say, grinning and shaking his fist. I can hear his voice and it makes me smile. But everything has changed since the accident. I'm happy getting a lift with Mary though; she needs to get to the markets early so I'm lucky to be able to go with her.*

We pull up outside the pool.

"Here we are love... you got everything?"

"Thanks Mary" *I say distractedly. My mind is on the morning ahead. She smiles and hands me my bag.*

“Good luck darl, you’ll be right.” *I smile nervously.*

*Inside the pool the sound of whistles and voices bounce off the walls. Sal waves from across the pool, her stopwatch hangs down from her neck as she writes up the time trial sheet. I put my flippers and pullbouv in my locker and strip down to my bathers. I pull out my cap and goggles. In front of the mirror I pin my hair into a bun, I use bobby pins to make sure no hairs escape. Every loose hair could slow me down. I try and regain focus as I fumble and drop my goggles. ‘Just breathe’ I tell myself, but my heart is racing and I can feel a film of sweat developing on my back. I put on my goggles and cap. I need a moment. I lean with my back against the cool brick wall of the change room. I lay the palms of my hands against the wall and feel the grouting between the bricks. I close my eyes and force my mind to think of something other than the trials... my French homework... I can’t remember how to do the future perfect... don’t I have a test today? Je lutte, je combats, j’échoue<sup>1</sup> ... I can’t remember anything. I feel a wave of panic... It’s no good, I can’t do it, I just can’t. It’s all too much, it’s too hard. Tears sting my eyes.*

I breathe deeply, I can’t let this happen. I won’t. I look again at myself in the mirror and know that I can’t stop now. I have come too far. I think of Dad at home making breakfast for the twins and know I can do it.

I splash my face with cold water and walk out onto the pool deck.

*As I wait on the starting block I think of the three legged dog and I feel my power returning. I can do it. I dive into the pool; my sense of completeness restored... J’aucune lutte plus longue... Je me rappelle, Je me rappelle<sup>2</sup> ... the water slides smoothly over my skin. My body feels perfect, flawless. I stroke down the pool, my arm cutting through the blue. I feel nothing.*

- <sup>1</sup> I am struggling, I am fighting,  
I am failing
- <sup>2</sup> I no longer struggle. I  
remember



*By Lydia Dobbin  
Year 12, Methodist Ladies’ College  
KEW – VIC.*

**THE FRED P. ARCHER  
LITERARY AWARD**

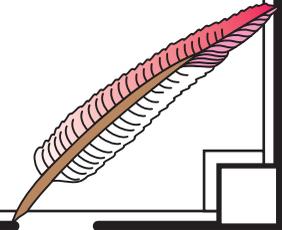
**Secondary School  
Short Story Category**

**— SECOND PRIZE —**

*Katrina Wrigley*

The Peninsula School, Mt. Eliza, Vic.

*“A Turning Point”*



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## A TURNING POINT

My feet carry me in the same direction, along the same path trodden so familiarly. I cross the street and my head nods mechanically in acknowledgement of the crossing lady as she clears the street for me to cross. Down the path I am led past rows of neatly clipped hedges and finely cropped lawns to the crossroad. Today I turn left. Every day in my entire life's history I have turned right, but today I turn left. Why? It is uncertain, but today is the day I have been preparing myself for. Today is the day.

The world seems so very different from this side. It is as though I have been looking at a 3D picture, my whole life, in two dimensions. Now I look again and it is like a magic eye; at first glance just a pretty pattern, but in that moment when focus slips, you can see through the glassy surface and into the water where a whole new world unfolds before you. Perhaps it is an image of horses frolicking, or ladies dancing, or a majestic elephant and her calf. The image has depth, context and more importantly, it is alive!

Today the world reveals itself to me. I no longer look at the image on a person's face and see the mask that conceals them, but I see within. A clown on the street is no longer a merry icon of laughter and happiness, but a sad old man whose eyes reveal a tragic loss. No longer do I see the city as a place of hustle and bustle, colour and excitement. I see dark alleys too with sad homeless men in bundles of dirt and rags, and young girls who sell themselves to feed their addictions. I see segregation of races due to prejudice and hatred, tilling lone streets with migrants hidden away so as not to mar or change the city's own ambiance and cultural appearance. My world may have unveiled itself, but do I truly wish to see it in this new light? I pause.

I retrace my steps, like a movie switched to rewind. I catch myself and head home. Every day I have wondered of the possibilities of simply taking that one step to the left. One step and I would be free. Today the dream became a reality, but has my dream become a nightmare?

Alone I walk the old path, familiar and safe. Or is it? Everything is as it seems; straight, formal and even. Not one leaf dares to stray from the neat hedges. People smile, dogs walk obediently behind their masters and children silently follow their teachers in perfect straight lines. But it is not the same.

Something is wrong.

Now I see it. This world is flat. There is no depth. I try to see in people what I saw before, but it is useless. They are as dolls. This perfect world within which I lived is plastic. I felt I knew all there was to know, but now I see it was wrong. There is so much more to discover, so much is foreign and unknown. I rush back to the crossroad, and to my horror it is gone.

The path to the left, vanished without a trace, was my only hope of escape. A tiny glimmer of hope, offered like an oasis in a desert, only to be discovered it is a mirage. I could cry, the knowledge that there is more to life was tantalisingly close, how it burns cruelly that I should only realise what was offered when it is gone. How sweet it was to be ignorant.

I trudge home to my mother, a familiar place, which doesn't feel cold and false. There is still depth in my home. Perhaps the foundations of love upon which it was built have spared it from this shallow world. I go to bed.

Upon awakening my eyes I instantly fix upon a shape at the back of my room. The dawn light dances across the room, and through sleep blurred eyes, the shadow may or may not exist. From the gloom a voice drifts my way and my strained ears tune in and pick up the sound. Quiet at first, but strengthening, the sound gradually becomes words.

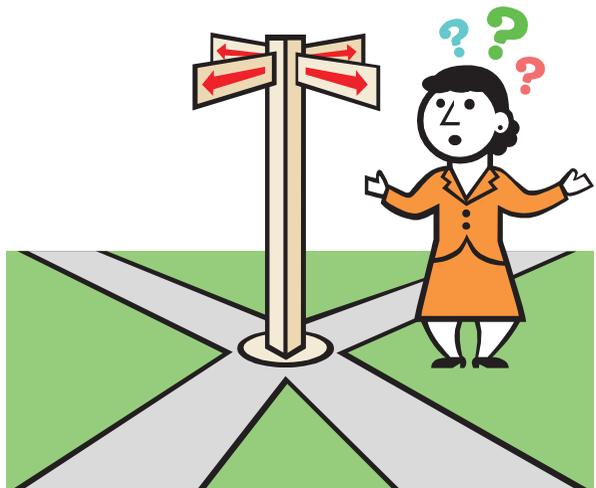
'I was young once too', it begins, 'I couldn't wait for the moment I would be free. Free to live in a world unbounded by the limitations of a small suburban town'. It shifts. 'I loathed my parents for making me live in such a place; a place where everyone smiled and a tear was never shed. True emotion was hidden behind closed doors. All I wanted was to live. So every weekend I would take the train to the city. I talked to strangers, wore alien clothes and went to foreign places filled with stories of seductively bizarre, far distant lands. I prayed for freedom. I wanted to escape so badly it hurt. The bitter sweet truth, like a splinter in my thumb, never leaving my side. My thirst for knowledge of this unknown world was like an addiction; the more I learned the more I wanted. Then one day it was mine. Thrown out of home at sixteen. I was truly alone, and the world no longer seemed a welcome place. So I fled. I tried to find what I had lost but when I found it, it was no longer the same. I wasn't ready.

I swore that I would never do such a thing to my own child, yet here we are. I wanted to teach her of the richness of the world, but in my need to protect her I failed. But she is ready. Do not be afraid my love, face the world without fear and it will embrace you and its secrets will be unlocked. I tried to protect you but I have not learnt from my own experiences. I tell you this now so that you may understand, because in two years you will be facing it alone. For now take heart in the knowledge that what you are searching for lives in everyone, you just need to know where to find it.'

And with that the presence leaves.

I walk again down the road, my feet leading the way. I again come to a crossroad, and this time I see that the way to the left is still there, slightly obscured from view by an innocent shrub. I smile as I walk to the right, knowing that in two years time I will confidently take that path but for now I am content to walk past it. There is plenty left to learn before I take that road, Today I smile at the crossing lady and it hits me. Everyone has a story. It is simply that yesterday I couldn't see it. Look into her eyes and it comes easily, the image changes as focus slips, and the 2D print becomes an image. A mother, a son at home, too ill to raise himself from bed and a fatherly figure standing protectively behind his bed. Turn away not wanting to invade her privacy, but a tingle goes down my spine, with the knowledge that I can see. I am growing up and I cannot turn back. Life is unfolding before my eyes and I am not afraid. I look it squarely in the eye and stare back proudly.

*By Katrina Wrigley  
Year 11  
The Peninsula School  
MT ELIZA – VIC.  
Teacher: Mr. Peter Cole*





**THE BUSHHELLS  
LITERARY AWARD**

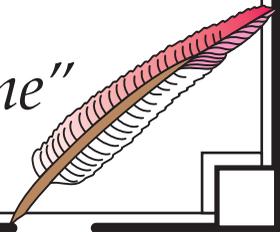
**Secondary School  
Poetry Category**

**— WINNER —**

*Victoria Wandke*

Carey Grammar School, Kew, Vic.

*“Once in a Lifetime”*



# ONCE IN A LIFETIME

Growing up as a child in this cold, harsh world  
War, crime, discovery, a new age uncurled

History vanishing, war standing its place  
Planets being discovered, way up in space

Self consciousness, jealousy, hatred and greed  
Who cares about another person's need?

Do you abide by the rules? Or do you make your own way?  
Do you follow the crowd or do you have your own say?

Clocks tick, tick ticking, this time is racing  
Each hour gets quicker, another day we are facing

Murder, rape, friendship and lies  
Countries, states, cities and allies.

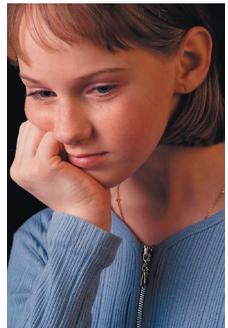
Everyone always says to put hundred percent in  
But when you stop and think, what does it really mean?

Are they telling you to face each day with a smile?  
Or are they trying to say push harder and make it worthwhile?  
Are you gonna try drugs! Maybe shorten your years  
Pressure from family, friends and peers  
Which country to live in, which state, which nation?  
You only get to live once or is there reincarnation?

What happens after death? Is there other life out there?  
Who is God and are these answers somewhere?

Each day we get older. Growing in time  
Make every day worthwhile, it's a one in a lifetime

*By Victoria Wandke  
Carey Grammar School  
KEW – VIC.*



THE  
JACK BROCKHOFF  
FOUNDATION  
LITERARY AWARD

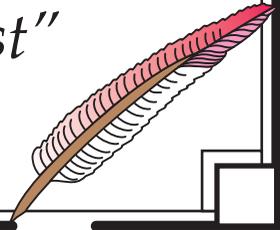
Secondary School  
Poetry Category

— SECOND PRIZE —

*Nicholas J. Arnold*

Mornington Secondary College, Vic.

*“Valley of the Lost”*



# VALLEY OF THE LOST

Courage can be found in many  
 But foolishness in more  
 It can burn at your soul like hot coals  
 A fire at your core

But for many courage is their life  
 It blazes within their eyes  
 But often foolishness is its true form  
 And loss ends up their prize

To one man, brave and stubborn  
 Thought courage he could nurse  
 But it led him to his final move  
 To carry on a curse

For this is where the tale begins  
 A man proud as he was strong  
 But pride is seen to be a sin  
 And thus his will dared last long

Stupid thoughts seemed to cloud his head  
 And stubborn as he was born  
 He dared not heed wise counsel  
 And left before the dawn

He dared too courageous  
 For away their wards he tossed  
 And as the rising sun entered the sky  
 He entered the Valley of the Lost

He had cast aside the elders' warnings  
 A choice that would soon be repented  
 For those who dared descend its misty slopes  
 Were damned before they entered

Gone with the wind they used to say  
 For those who took this such endeavour  
 Gone with the wind they used to say  
 When they were lost forever

But this man cared not for myth  
 He knew nor cared what await  
 He entered into the silenced forest  
 And sealed his ordained fate

For an eternity he seemed to wander  
 An eternity he would know  
 His shadow cast into this hidden abyss  
 Which would soon consume him so

As he wandered on and on  
 It came into his sight  
 A small girl lost in the fog  
 In this silenced light



She smiled and waved at him  
And then ran off into the wood  
And foolishly he followed her into the mists  
Not thinking whether he should

He followed her further into the valley's grasp  
Not knowing her true reason  
Not knowing that she was of the valley's curse  
And that he had been caught in treason

Suddenly the girl had stopped  
And she turned to show her lies  
True horror etched across the man's face  
In the black void of her eyes.

She smiled, giggled then disappeared  
As the man cried out in pain  
For he could now feel the reaper's touch  
As he struggled to sustain

The silence of the forest  
Crept in upon his heart  
Relieving him from life itself  
And tearing him apart

Courageous he thought he was  
But foolish it was true  
The curse, his fate now consumed his soul  
This curse that he now knew

Legends say they still see him  
As he awaits in silent sin  
When he will smile at those who dare enter  
the valley  
As they become lost, just like him.

*By Nicholas J. Arnold  
Year 10, Mornington Secondary College  
MORNINGTON – VIC.  
Teacher: Miss Leigh*

---

## THREE LIVES IN LONDON

**Mary Cooper**  
Saturday

“Dear God, please have mercy, help us Lord in London town, please remove the horrid black shadow cast over us all. Amen.”

Mary Cooper, a modest housewife rose from her prayer. Her eyes solemn and on the brink of tears. Thoughts racing, fearing the worst, like a rabbit caught in a trap awaiting death, she stumbled towards the kitchen knowing that any day soon she would lose her frail daughter to the plague. Mary entered the kitchen and began preparing breakfast, trying to get on with her day, ignoring the despair and horror welling up in her heart.

Wandering from room to room, busying herself with washing and cooking, Mary dared not think of her daughter's fate. As the fading light seeped through a shuttered



**THE QANTAS  
FLIGHT CATERING  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

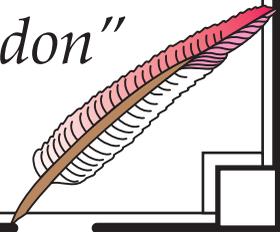
**Primary School  
Short Story Category**

**— WINNER —**

*Kelsey Pegrum*

**St. Denis Primary School, Perth, WA**

*"Three Lives in London"*



## ***Young Australian Writers***

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window, Mary entered her bedroom and slid open a drawer. Silently she selected a neatly folded handkerchief tying it over her face for protection. Slowly, and filled with fear she pulled the handle of her daughter's room, dreading the sorrow she would find within. From the doorway Mary glimpsed her child's face, pale and lifeless; at that moment she knew that her only child, her beloved daughter was dead. An immense wave of emotion washed over her, engulfing her soul. Consumed by grief, she rushed to the crib, threw her arms around the child and unable to hold back the tears any longer, cried her heart out.

### **Wendy Peters**

Sunday

Wendy Peters woke early on Sunday morning. Springing from her bed she dressed in her best Sunday pinafore, combed her long hazelnut hair and tied it in a neat bow.

"Mummy I'm ready for church", she bubbled cheerily.

"We're not going today Wendy", her mother replied, her voice slow and cheerless.

"Why mummy?" Wendy questioned, taken aback by the news.

"I want to see Sarah!"

"Not today."

"When will I see her, mummy?"

"One day."

"When?"

"When you go to heaven, darling."

"Why, where is she?"

"In heaven dear, with Jesus!"



Wendy's usual merry face was torn away by a cloud of disbelief; her friend, her lifetime playmate was lost to the plague. Quick footsteps echoed down the hall, the only sound

heard as she dashed to the front door. Silent tears cascading down her rose red cheeks as she saw the wreath of white lilies adorned upon the gate of the house across the cobbles and the small white bundle lying ahead of the polished wooden door.

### **Dave Locket**

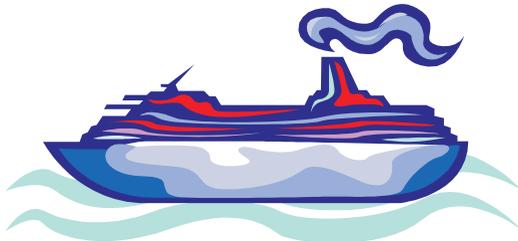
Monday

“Why do I have this blasted job?” Dave Locket asked himself as he staggered out the door of his London home. It was 5:00 am and he was preparing to begin his death round. For many gloomy months he’d wondered why he had this awful job in spite of the fact that he hated it so much, but although the job was horrible his family’s suffering was an even more devastating issue. Mounting his old wooden wagon Dave began his round. Arriving at his first stop he bellowed, “Put out your dead, put out your dead”. His booming voice concealing his horror.

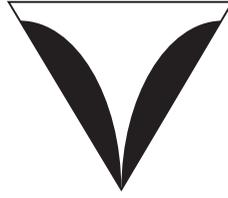
Dave watched as a miserable mother ambled down the cobbled road placing a limp, motionless body in his outstretched arms. The woman looked into Dave’s eyes, trying desperately to hold back the eruption of sadness that had recently unleashed inside her, she softly whispered, “Good-bye Sarah, my love”, Her face drained of happiness, engulfed by despair.

Absorbing her grief, Dave gently placed the corpse of a young girl onto the cart. He continued on his round accumulating a mountainous pile of bodies. The stench was nauseating, worse than anything imaginable.

Finally Dave reached the gravesite where he was joined by other gravediggers; all crowded around an enormous pit. Dave silently staggered to the back of the cart, trapped in this real life horror story; he emptied the bodies into the pit. “The stench of the bodies will soon die out”, muttered Dave, “But the sadness and horror surrounding them will live forever”.



*By Kelsey Pegrum  
Age 11  
St. Denis Primary School  
PERTH – WA*



**THE TELEMATICS TRUST  
LITERARY AWARD**

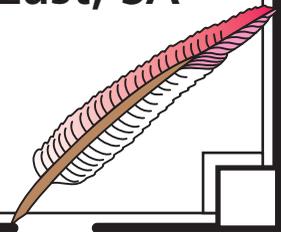
**Primary School  
Short Story Category**

**— SECOND PRIZE —**

*Haylee Wilson*

Glenelg School, Glenelg East, SA

*“Fantasy”*



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# FANTASY

It was a beautiful winter's day and I was walking through Belair National Park. I often went for walks to find a great spot to settle down to read a book.

I was on a trail where there were huge trees leaning inwards to make it like a tunnel. There were specks of light shining through the dark branches. I came up to a section of the trail where many trees had fallen. They were covered with moss. I walked over to the fascinating spot and ran my hand over the moss. It was cool and soft. I wandered a little further when I tripped and banged my head. I was knocked out. A few minutes later I woke up.

"Ow, that hurt", as I rubbed my sore head. I sat up slowly and I didn't know where I was. All the moss covered logs were gone and I was lying on what felt like damp grass.

I stood up and looked around. I slowly walked a little further down the unfamiliar track. Then I realised I had shrunk. The fallen log had not disappeared, they were above me. I was about the size of a lipstick, six centimetres tall. I looked on my back and saw a pair of wings.

"Aahhh! I think I've been turned into a fairy."

I pinched myself. "Ow." It was real.

I got my breath back then decided to explore. After a while I heard people talking, so I decided to follow the voices. A few turns down the trail and I had walked into a town of fairies. There were shops and houses and lots of little fairies. It was so cute! It was then I realised I was one of them. I walked around the cute little town. I fitted in perfectly.

It was late afternoon and I was getting hungry.



I went into the local bakery named, "The Little Town Bakery". I was drawn to it by its smell! Inside it was wall to wall cakes and buns. I couldn't decide on what yummy treat

## *Young Australian Writers*

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to choose. Ten minutes later I had a beautiful, creamy home-made Chocolate Eclair sitting in front of me. After eating at least two cream buns and three chocolate eclairs, I was exploring the cute fairy town.

Suddenly, I realised that since I had wings then maybe I could fly. I felt quite silly just thinking of this. So I checked if I could actually flap them. Good, I could. So I flapped them as hard as I could. I was off.

“Oh my, I can fly”, I yelled out, good no-one heard me because I was up so high.

I did a few loop-the-loops. It felt like I was free as a bird. It was great.

Then I flew up and up and up. Then everything went white. I had just flown through a cloud. I found a nice big one to lie down on and read my book named “A Ring of Mushrooms”, as it was quite comfy.

Then I began to fall. “Aaahh.”

When I hit the ground, I slightly opened my eyes. I felt someone shaking me.

“Lisa, are you OK?” said what sounded like my mum. “You must have fallen and bumped your head.”

“Yeh, I’m fine.” It must have been a dream.

When I stood up I saw that I was lying in a circle of mushrooms!

As I was walking back with my mum I got my book out. When I opened it, something fell out. It was a receipt from ‘The Little Town Bakery’, two cream buns and three chocolate eclairs, total \$6.85.

I mustn’t have been dreaming.

Today still I don’t know if it was a dream or not.

*By Haylee Wilson, Year 6 – Age 11  
Glenelg School, GLENELG EAST – SA*

## 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  
PERCY BAXTER TRUST  
ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD

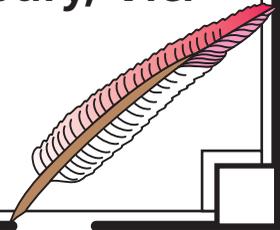
Primary School  
Poetry Category

— WINNER —

*Amy Cassell*

Strathcona Baptist Girls'  
Grammar School, Canterbury, Vic.

*"Granny"*



# GRANNY

My Heart swells,  
For her wide blue eyes, twinkling in the morning sun.  
Her pale skin creased with lines,  
each representing a tale of excitement and adventure.

My Heart swells,  
For her thin feeble hands grasping mine  
Her dainty figure beside me.

My Heart swells  
For her thin white hair rippling in the cool breeze.  
Her striped cardigan wrapped tightly  
around her small shoulders.

My Heart swells  
For her slowly turning to face me.  
Her arms gradually wrapping around me  
And, for her back to me,  
for her walking away.

*By Amy Cassell  
Age 12  
Strathcona Baptist  
Girls' Grammar School  
CANTERBURY – VIC.*





**Insurance**

**THE GE INSURANCE  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

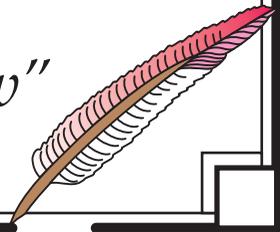
**Primary School  
Poetry Category**

**— SECOND PRIZE —**

*Sonia Dodd*

**Mayfield West  
Demonstration School, NSW**

*“Rainforest Snow”*



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# RAINFOREST SNOW

Down the river  
On a cold winter day  
Snow fell on my head  
And the sun went away  
Leaves fall down on the ground  
In spring flowers grow  
Summer, a cloud of butterflies come  
In the water, we get a boat to row  
Winter, there is snow  
Falling on my head  
If it is really cold  
I go straight to bed  
Monkeys swing in the trees  
In spring flowers grow  
And of course, in winter  
There is rainforest snow



*By Sonia Dodd, Age 7*

*Mayfield West Demonstration School, MAYFIELD WEST – NSW*

**THE DON BURKE  
LITERARY AWARD**

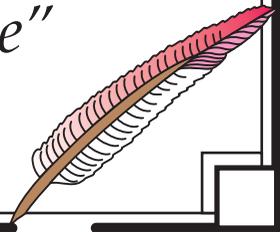
**Poetry Selection**

**— WINNER —**

*Claire Peoples*

**Siena College, Camberwell, Victoria**

*“A Tranquil Place”*





## *A Tranquil Place*

A docile breeze blows soothingly onto my face,  
I smile as I know; this is a truly wondrous place.

The sun dances majestically with the clouds,  
In this fragrant field it is simple to avoid pushy crowds.  
This is a blissful meadow, filled with fabulous flowers,

I could quite easily sit here for hours.

My purple parasol twirls and spins,  
In this tranquil place I am free of all sins.

I feel like a stranger, a visitor, a guest,  
This is a place where I can lay my mind to rest.

If only I could stay,  
Maybe just another day...

But alas, wishes and dreams seldom come true,

Oh, what is a fair young lady to do?

So, as the wind tousles my hair,

And I have not a single care.

I am forever lost in a delusional daydream,  
That all places are far more than they seem...

*By Claire Peoples*

*Year 9*

*Siena College*

*CAMBERWELL – VIC.*



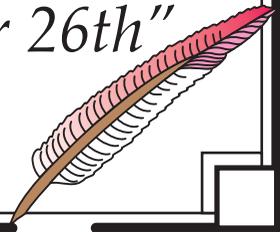
**THE ASG  
LITERARY AWARD  
Poetry Category**

**— WINNER —**

*Kristen Colaco*

**Overnewton Anglican  
Community College**

*“Remember December 26th”*



## REMEMBER DECEMBER 26th

“Christmas is a festive time of year”,  
 My mother used to say.  
 Until the 26th morning,  
 Which we know as Boxing Day.

On that very Sunday morning,  
 Our family was at the market.  
 Dad, mum, sis and I,  
 Filling up our shopping basket.

It was quiet as usual,  
 Until we heard a sudden cry.  
 A lady was shouting out,  
 “Run, before you all die!”

As we turned around,  
 All we could do was stare.  
 For we saw something strange,  
 Something very rare.

It was a huge tidal wave.  
 Right in front of our eyes.  
 “Run quickly!” said dad.  
 As we ran to save our lives

While we were trying to escape,  
 The water rose to our knees.  
 Mum kept saying to herself,  
 “Oh God, help us please.”

Our family was in danger,  
 As the water reached my height.  
 Dad lifted me up,  
 Through such a tragic sight.

The water became more powerful,  
 People and cars were treated like toys.  
 Houses crumbled to pieces,  
 Through destruction and much noise.

While the water kept rising,  
 Dad saw his friend in need.  
 His foot was tied around something.  
 He needed to be freed.

Dad told us to keep running.  
 As he helped his dearest friend.  
 We knew we might not see dad again.  
 Could this be the end?

With tears running down our cheeks,  
 Mum lifted my sister and I.  
 The water became very rough.  
 There was no way we could survive.

A piece of wood came floating past  
 I held on with all my might.  
 But mum and sis didn't make it,  
 As they floated out of sight.

The wave had washed them away.  
 It was such a nasty view.  
 As my mother and sister left me,  
 She said, “I'll always love you”.

I remember those words so clearly.  
 As I sit here in this room.  
 For now I am in an orphanage.  
 Hoping to leave very soon.

But I know that I can't leave here,  
 Cause all my family has gone.  
 I just have to pray for them.  
 And sit here and mourn.

As I look out of the door,  
 Rubble is all that remains.  
 We are refugees in our own country.  
 Which is so hard to explain.

All we can do is pray to God,  
 Pray for that day in December,  
 A terrible tragedy of mankind  
 It's a day the world will always remember.

*By Kristen Colaco*

*Age 12*

*Overnewton Anglican Community College*

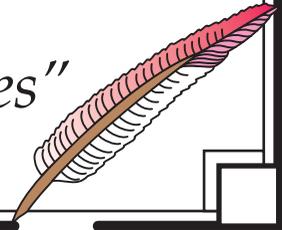


**THE ASG  
LITERARY AWARD  
Short Story Category**

**— WINNER —**

*Emily Webb-Smith*  
Geraldton Grammar School,  
Geraldton, WA

*“Heavenly Peaches”*



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## HEAVENLY PEACHES

The wooden crate of plump peaches from Mary's orchard sat on the kitchen bench.

"...A gift for Grandma and Grandpa, not you kids", Mary warned as she drove off in her rickety old farm ute. Grandma sighed and gathered up the coffee cups.

"Grandpa is still very ill so I want you to take Tip to the beach", she ordered.

Since Grandpa had become sick, no one had time to take Tip for walks along the windy ocean. Now Tip wagged her tail expectantly and pawed at the front door until the grandchildren emerged wrapped in scarves.

"Afternoon tea will be ready when you come home." Although grumpy these days, Grandma hadn't forgotten how hungry children were after a visit to the ocean.

By the time they begun the return trip, the cold southerly winds began to blow. Tip marched along stiffly, the sudden chill in the air combining painfully with her aching paws. The children stopped to play on the swings but Tip, sensing something was wrong, trotted obediently home.

The red blinking light outside the house whispered Tip's fears. She cowered by the gate as Grandma silently followed Grandpa's still shape into the ambulance. Tip bounded back to the park and barked furiously for the children's return.

Although Grandpa's hospital room in the city was made cheery by bunches of roses, his voice whispered and his eyes dulled. The children sat stiffly in cold vinyl chairs and tried hard not to breathe in the hospital's strange smells. Grandma fussed over the neatness of bedclothes and rattled on to cover the eerie quietness.

"Get better quick dear so we can go home and eat Mary's peaches."

Grandpa shifted wearily in his bed, "Good old Mary. Grew the best peaches. Bet they taste like heaven", he drooled.

Grandpa was thrilled to see his old friends make special trips to visit him in the eternally cold hospital. Gradually he tired from his treatment and slept for long periods.

“It’s time we ate those peaches”, he whispered early one morning to the crisp night nurse. She repeated this strange comment to Grandma. Grandma looked knowingly as she pulled her chair close to the bed, whispered in his ear and sat back to wait. After half an hour, she stroked Grandpa’s peaceful face for the last time.

With Tip happily back to her old tricks of chasing seagulls, Grandma thankfully sat down to rest on the bench overlooking the ocean. The walk proved to her how out of shape she had become over the last few months.

A sudden burst of energy this morning sent her bottling Mary’s crate of peaches until the house was full of their sweet smell. Having peaches all year round was comforting to her, now that she was alone. Carefully she drew the last precious peach from her coat pocket and bit into its juicy flesh.

“Just like you said Grandpa, Heavenly peaches”, she murmured into the fading sunset.



*By Emily Webb-Smith  
Age 12  
Geraldton Grammar School  
GERALDTON – WA*

**THE HELEN HANDBURY  
LITERARY AWARD**

**The 'Bright Kids' Award  
Secondary School Category**

**— WINNER —**

*Lachlan McGinnes*

**Xavier College**

***"From Rats to Cats and Money Made"***

**— 1st runner up —**

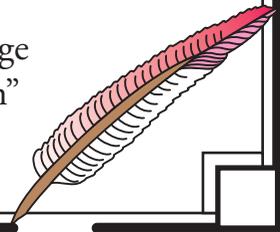
***Rebecca Thorpe* – Ringwood Secondary College**

**"I Wish"**

**— 2nd runner up —**

***Luke Shuster* – Xavier College**

**"The Three Little Pigs Again"**



**THE HELEN HANDBURY  
LITERARY AWARD**

**The 'Bright Kids' Award  
Primary School Category**

**— WINNER —**

*Chloe Pukk*

**Diamond Creek East Primary School**  
*"The Adventures of a Cockatiel"*

— 1st runner up —

*Katherine Padoin* – Our Lady Help of Christians  
"My Trip to Italy"

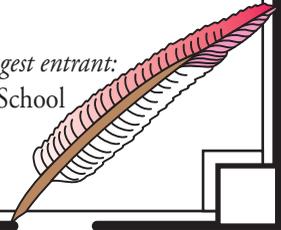
— 2nd runners up —

*Matthew DeMaria*  
Mitcham Primary School  
"The Mean Octopus"

*Harry Landgren*  
Glenferrie Primary School  
"Little Red in Reverse"

*And a special certificate of achievement for our youngest entrant:*

Rhiannan Camillo – Rolling Hills Primary School  
"A Fantastic Holiday"



# *Autographs*

