

Judge's Report – 2016 Senior School Short Story Competition

This year's Senior School Short Story competition winner is Through the Window.

The author has a vivid imagination. The author created very good images and evoked an era with precise details such as coal dust, ringing bells, petticoats, the lantern pole, smoke in the street, and the wooden nutcracker toy.

Recommendations to the author and these ideas apply to any short story writer – when you redraft a short story, always think of what the main character wants that is hard to get and what obstacles get in the way of the character achieving their goal.

If you set up a character's dilemma early, the reader will want to read on to see what will happen next and to see how will it end.

I encourage students to write with verbs and nouns to give vitality to their stories, and to write the way you talk rather than to write how you think you have to write. You don't need to develop a writer's voice. Stay with your voice. It's your unique voice, which brings a story to life.

For the final redraft, I always ask my students six questions:

- What is the point of the story?
- What does your main character want that's hard to get?
- What obstacles get in the way?
- Does your story move towards a crisis that forces your character to act and to make a decision that reveals his 'true' character?
- How has your character changed in the story?
- What would you like the reader to be left with?

These questions can be applied to any short story.

Congratulations to the author of Through the Window. Your story showed you put a lot of thought into it.

I encourage all students to keep writing fiction. Have fun with it. It is exhilarating to discover you can create a whole new world.

Thank you.

Annette Trevitt