

## **JUDGE'S REPORT: MY BROTHER JACK OPEN POETRY AWARD 2016**

**JUDGED BY: GAYELENE CARBIS**

FIRST PRIZE:	Ancient Eucalypts (14)
SECOND PRIZE:	Letter To Rosa Luxemborg (39)
THIRD PRIZE:	My Father's Old Dog (59)
COMMENDED:	earth embroidered (61)
	The Spaces (15)
	Me (9)

It was wonderful to see so many entries for this prestigious Poetry Award. One thing that stood out was the number of entries by primary and secondary school children. While I'm thrilled to see poets of all ages enter Poetry Awards, I would encourage children and secondary school entrants to enter their work into the categories specific to their age groups. A poet of any age can write a great poem. However, it is very difficult for younger poets, who are still developing their appreciation of poetry, to have the level of skill that an adult poet has, often after many years of honing their craft. I commend all the young poets who entered and encourage them to continue reading and writing poetry. I hope to see them win recognition for their efforts and talent in the future.

To the winning poems: the following poems stood out for their - originality; technical excellence; form and flow; choice of words; and overall impact. These were the criteria by which all poems were judged.

First Prize - "Ancient Eucalypts" - is a beautiful poem. Simple but powerful, with richly symbolic imagery. The poem captures a sense of the awe, majesty and mysteriousness of 'ancient,' of the Biblical serpent. A poem that is allegorical and deeply philosophical, this is a stirring indictment against all our rape and pillages of the earth; of civilisation, of culture.

Second Prize - "Letter to Rosa Luxemborg" has a confidence in voice; its lengthy sentences, its rambling, slightly archaic language, this stands out for its metaphorical and political impact.

Third Prize - "My Father's Old Dog" - is a simple, accessible poem moved me. Not easy to take some 'old ideas' and make them still seem fresh and new - and moving.

The Commended poems are outstanding in their originality and technical excellence: "earth embroidered" and "The Spaces" share originality in voice; technical innovation; and complexity of thought. I would like to make special mention of "Me." A very good poem with an original voice and impressive technical skill.