

KATIKATI HAIKU CONTEST 2010

Judges' Report

Please note that this information is embargoed until June 6.

Judging for the contest is done “blind”. That is, author names are not attached to the poems that the judges receive. There were 445 entries in the senior contest this year (327 in 2008) and 117 entries in the junior contest (141 in 2008).

- Margaret Beverland, contest secretary

Senior Section (18 & over): Judge Sandra Simpson

There were many good-quality haiku entered this year that were a delight to read – and which made the task of judging an enjoyable challenge. I hope that first-time or novice writers aren't discouraged if their work wasn't placed. Judging is a subjective process that might have a different outcome tomorrow. But I do hope they take the time to read and analyse the winning poems. Learning from one another is one of the nicest aspects of belonging to the haiku community.

First place:

a moment before sunrise –
ice singing
beneath the swans' feet

- Martin Lucas (England)

Haiku are poetry, but writers don't always remember that – this haiku shows someone who truly understands the form. Yes, haiku are observational, but they should also lift us from the mundane, make us think (or look) again and allow us to share fully in the moment. Some, like this one, might even make our hearts rise. Martin's haiku also has a pleasing “sound effect” with its subtly repeated assonance, and by using only two hard consonants in the entire poem he makes it “soft”, like a feather.

Second place:

3 a.m
the overhead fan
clicks clicks clicks

- Joanne Watcyn-Jones (Australia)

The restorative power of sleep is a fragile gift and anyone who's had a disturbed night will identify with this haiku. Racing thoughts that can't be

controlled, a dripping tap, the neighbours' party or, in this case, so hot the ceiling fan has to be left on all night, creating a new and different night-time noise. By adding a repetitive word, and choosing the slightly annoying sound of "clicks", Joanne makes this a winner.

Third place:

he leaves in an ambulance –
the chrysanthemum buds
closed tight

- Kirsten Cliff (Papamoa)

This is a more traditional haiku, containing both an overt season word and a juxtaposition construction. The contrast of illness, presumably severe if an ambulance has been called, with the buds ready to burst into life is adept. A reader might also find a link between the colour of the ambulance (white with a yellow stripe) and the colour of the buds (white when tight closed with yellow being a common chrysanthemum colour). Haiku are about the eternal and this poem captures that exactly.

All the Highly Commended and Commended poems are fine haiku too, congratulations to their authors.

Highly Commended (in no particular order):

a field in bloom –
the foal's tracks
follow the mare's

- Carole MacRury (USA)

his father's death ...
shadows of raindrops
on the window ledge

- Beverley George (Australia)

fallen leaf –
the stream carrying
another silence

- Eduard Tara (Romania)

Commended (in no particular order):

liquidambar
already my toddler's hair
darkening

- Vanessa Proctor (Australia)

full moon at Motuhoa
stingrays
cloud the evening tide

- Barbara Hart (Tauranga)

soft mist ...
a mother cups
her baby's head

- Joanne Watcyn-Jones

half light
the river scarred
by a heron

- Beverley George

Best Local Haiku:

This haiku deals with an everyday event, the moving of a garden plant, yet the author has captured the why of the moment with great poignancy. It's a whole, rich, sad story told in nine words.

helping dad
move the rose bush
scent of mum

- Dave Robertson (Katikati)

Junior Section (17 & under): Judge Catherine Mair

I enjoyed reading the haiku and congratulate everyone who entered. Haiku for all their apparent simplicity are difficult to write well and many of you have made fine attempts.

First place, equal:

evening walk
at the top of the hill
the loudest bird

- Sophia Frentz (Tauranga, 17)

The sense of sound is not so frequently captured in haiku. A lot is suggested in this poem. The quiet evening walk. The achievement of gaining the top of the hill and then the clarity of that bird call. The poem involves the reader and is very evocative. Very well done.

between the gaps
a crab hole
changes colour

- Harry Frentz (Tauranga Boys High, 14)

This lovely haiku leaves a lot to the imagination. It conjures up a beach, wet sand and the tide's inward and outward flow. I love the originality of this perception, the focus on the crab hole rather than the more expected crab. Congratulations!

Third place:

among the swans
angry voices –
family photo

- Sophia Frentz

I don't think the pause after "angry voices" helps this humorous little verse. I thoroughly enjoy the tongue in cheek humour. It brings back a dire day when I attempted to get my four children photographed.

Highly Commended:

Both these poems were close to place-getters.

summer moon –
a cricket
starts his band

- Harry Frentz

Incidentally the correct gender has been identified. The males are responsible for all that racket.

first class –
the girl next to me
already passing notes

- Sophia Frentz

Very well constructed and biting humor.

Commended:

There are also several other haiku which deserve mention.

netball goal
hangs out
waiting for the ball

- Shavaughan Vaega (Whakamarama School, 12)

sandy footprints
leaving their mark
on the world

- Tara Blackshaw (Matahui Road, 12)

golf ball
lying still – waiting
for its golfer

- Zane Petersen (Tauriko School, 11)

low tide –
I see
Neptune's beard

- Harry Frentz

footprints in the sand
following us
destroyed by waves

- Shavaughn Vaega