

## **Alexis White Poetry Competition 2018**

### **Results and judge's comments**

#### **Airini Beautrais**

##### **Junior:**

###### **3<sup>rd</sup> place: 'Gone with the Wind' by Nyvein Chung**

This poem contains evocative sensory imagery, such as the 'fallen petals' and the 'damp trail.' Figurative language, for example 'the twigs were like a witch's finger' is used to good effect. The poem explores a big theme using simple, direct language.

###### **2<sup>nd</sup> place: 'Her' by Helen Garnett**

This poem is written in a personal voice, using a conversational tone. The poem has a strong emotional centre and is simple yet moving.

###### **1<sup>st</sup> place: 'Stirring Memories' by Nyvein Chung**

I was drawn to this poem because of the richness of its imagery, which goes beyond the visual and brings in other sensory experiences. The references to place names, translations, and the use of Japanese words helps place the poem strongly in its setting. The ending makes the emotional centre of the poem come through clearly.

##### **Senior:**

###### **3<sup>rd</sup> place: 'showerhead' by Daisy van Wel**

This poem demonstrates strongly musical qualities and suggests an ability as a lyricist. The repeated lines (perhaps a chorus) are simple yet appealing, and mix familiar and unfamiliar imagery. The sound qualities of this poem are strong, including rhyme, assonance and alliteration. The concrete imagery of the showerhead, knots in the hair, water and tears helps the poem move beyond the abstract mode favoured by a lesser type of lyric.

###### **2<sup>nd</sup> place: 'Hemorrhages' by Sophie Engel**

'Hemorrhages' is at once humorous, surprising, and moving. The poem makes use of a variety of metaphors to convey a particular experience or state of mind. Simple imagery such as keys or an insect bite is contrasted with difficult personal experience such as 'commuting between divorced parents.' The lines about the country song contain comic

power as well as shock. The almost sing-song rhymes both complement and contrast with the content of the poem.

**1<sup>st</sup> place: 'teenagers are overreacting' by Phoebe Keel**

This evocative prose poem is packed with intense, often surprising concrete imagery. I loved the line 'spit in your shoes before you wear them and kiss your knuckles before you leave the door.' It has charm-like, folktale qualities. Much of the imagery, such as the old cigarette papers, charcoal, tobacco in your teeth, builds on connotations to create a gritty, dark atmosphere. The line 'use knives to wash your skin and take showers in the dirt' is vivid and striking, suggestive of a curse. The overall emotional centre of the poem comes through strongly.

**Special mention: 'Parihaka' by Hannah Hall**

This poem in Te Reo Māori draws on the famous story of Parihaka, using evocative and often moving imagery. The deep sadness of the event and its associations come through clearly. I would like to commend Hannah for making the effort to write in Te Reo and investigate an important aspect of New Zealand history.