



Judge's Report - Term 1, 2022

Theme: Responsibility

2022 is off to a flying start at Little Stories, Big Ideas! We were thrilled to welcome **Readings**, one of Australia's best-loved independent book retailers, to our awesome pool of sponsors. We also celebrated our first school incursion milestone, presenting the art of micro fiction to a cohort of wonderfully creative Year 8's (thanks for having us Mount Eliza Secondary College)! And we racked up a record number of entries with our Term 1 theme of *responsibility* garnering 203 submissions from secondary school students Australia-wide.

You'd think now Little Stories, Big Ideas is firmly into its second year, we'd be accustomed to the imaginative and diverse scope of creativity and talent demonstrated by our nation's young writers...but 'Generation Next' continues to impress and awe. *Responsibility* drew forth a multi-faceted interpretation of not only the theme, but also the execution. We were pleased to see creative narrative structures and plot devices intermingling with poetry in both traditional and contemporary forms.

While some students chose a more literal interpretation of the theme, tapping into experiences and scenarios where personal duty, sacrifice, and obligation were showcased for impact and effect, others took a more introspective approach, using their 100 words to explore metaphor, motif, and symbolism. Overarchingly, the results were powerful and poignant.

From the plastic-ridden depths of our oceans, to the war-torn streets of Ukraine, from the shadows of sinister secrets, to stories of sacrifice and self-awareness, we've enjoyed reading every climate-changing, family-navigating, government-blaming, dragon-taming, cyber-punking, guilt-debunking entry!

Without further ado, you'll find the winners, placegetters, and honourable mentions for 2022 Term 1's theme of Responsibility on the following pages.

Term 2's theme will be **Ghost**. We know Australia's talented young writers will each apply their unique lens to this theme, and we can't wait to read the results!

Please spread the word to your students, membership base, children, social networks, and anyone you think would be interested in submitting their work for the chance to win terrific prizes while flexing their creative muscle. We'd love to read their entries!

Thanks for your ongoing support,

Joe and Rebecca

Year 10 -12 Winners

First Place

Someone's Muse or Nothing at All by Jasmine Phan of St Thomas More College, QLD

watching lily pads drift across a placid pond,
thinking, the dead artists would've loved this one.
they'd suffocate paint tubes for pigments
then weave them like fabric, fine-spun.

from below, light trickles through the plants,
haloing their veiny underbellies.
i wish i had something running through my capillaries
other than this viscid syrup, the colour of cherries.

vestiges of childhood sneer from the shore,
but their limbs are entombed in mud.
i've stopped trying to escape the water
everything of mine is cold—heart, stare, blood.

it's been this way forever,
it's my role;
the kind, paintable, empty
soul.

* We also congratulate Jasmine on a further Highly Commended piece, *My Body is a War Zone*

Second Place

Duty to the Dirt by Sophie Bridges of Westbourne Grammar School, VIC

A girl halts at the wrought-iron gate,
Before her lies nature's adornment,
White lacework guarding the estate,
A spider, yet harmless and dormant,

A horse-drawn cart is advancing,
Mature aunts return from high tea,
But are they that understanding,
If a sickening bug is all they do see?

A defender of lichen, soil, and earth,
The girl readily tarnishes her gloves,
To its spark of seldom mirth,
And woven doily, she succumbs,

Being shooed by the wagons chauffeur,
She daringly rises with blackened knees,
Grins, tips off her straw boater,
And that jewel of a critter runs free.

Third Place

The Dance That Would Kill by Abdullah Dawood of QSAMT, QLD

A vacuous spirit danced with the wind, its obscurity leaving it to dance past 1000s of eyes. Yet not a single eye fell upon it. Not a hint of care given. So it kept dancing. Beneath the glower of the sun and the moon. It would keep dancing until it met the sea, where it was intrigued to go, where it could be a jellyfish, or a ghost, beckoning to be eaten. And so, I felt responsible. Responsible to pick up the plastic bag, to protect the innocent in the sea, that would fall prey to its enticing dance.

Honourable Mention:

- ***My Body is a War Zone*** by Jasmine Phan of St Thomas More College
 - ***Grease*** by Shane Stevenson of St Marks College, WA
 - ***Vox Populi*** by Lee Curd, Manea Senior College, WA
 - ***Cries of the Sea*** by Sedra Schanan of Bellfield College NSW
 - ***Your Little Brother, Your Responsibility*** by Riley Houston of Urrbrae Agricultural School, SA
 - ***The Cursed Comedian; A World Without Joy*** by Asha Keshavarz of The King's School, NSW
 - ***9 to 5*** by Anagha Kulkarni of Mount Waverley Secondary College, VIC
 - ***Mother*** by Erika Shimada of Mansfield State High School, QLD
 - ***Kingdom of Ice*** by Tiana Sorensen of Mansfield State High School, QLD
 - ***Forever Young*** by Alice Tilson of Ivanhoe Girls Grammar School, VIC
 - ***Sacrifice*** by King Jayden of St Marks Anglican Community College, WA
 - ***Paint*** by Bridie Newman of Loreto College, Ballarat
 - ***Loyal Wretch*** by Anae Sostsavanh of Mansfield State High School, QLD
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Year 7 – 9 Winners

First Place

Years of Responsibility by Tehmina Dubash of Presbyterian Ladies' College, VIC

Past took the responsibility of survival,
Each other a friend, until rivals.
Past learnt about water and fire,
Hunt each day until the sun gets tired.
Past created bonds with creatures,
Present made them mantlepiece features.

Present took the responsibility of work,
Until their labour saw the bruising of Earth.
Present created all the machines,
Oil power, gas power, the power of electricity
Present made the lightbulb and cars
Future couldn't see the stars.

Future takes the responsibility of restoring the planet,
Future doesn't blame Past or Present.
You have been our greatest teacher,
Now have hope in Future...

Second Place

The Painter by Isabelle Mitchell of Mount Eliza Secondary College, VIC

Every canvas tells a story. Whether it's jovial or sorrowful, vivid or dim, each comes with their own line.

Mine is dappled, bold in places while deep in others, strokes of regret in the darkest of reds while content in the brightest of blues. I hold both the paint and the brush, each mark unique.

I grasp in my hands both my future and the future of others, for one stroke could kill

a thousand, while another save but one life.

It is my burden, and mine alone. For I am the painter. And life is the canvas.

Third Place

Responsible, drowning by Emma King-Li of Sydney Girls High School, NSW

There's a weight of responsibility; You do not realise how heavy it gets,

Until you cannot get up off the couch,

Until the tears are too heavy in your eyes and fall.

It hurts.

There's a taste of responsibility.

It's tea and coffee at midnight.

It's the saline of tears.

It's the bitter taste of words unsaid.

Are you okay?

There's a feeling sometimes,

That you are dying,

That you need someone to

Help you-

Save you-

Hug you-

That you are drowning,

But water in your lungs is normal,

Everyone is drowning.

Are you okay?

Honourable Mention:

- ***Break the Cycle by Emily Wu*** of Methodist Ladies College
- ***The Sinking Feeling*** by Lily Marx of Mount Eliza Secondary College
- ***Stolen Innocence*** by Naofar Shah of Mansfield State High School

- ***Cessation*** by Rochelle Saldanha of Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta
- ***The Fragments of Creation*** by Chelsea Cannes of Inner Sydney High School
- ***600-115*** by Aaliyah Chopra of Our Lady of the Mercy College
- ***Turning Dragon*** by Iluka de Visser of Mansfield State High School
- ***Once They Said*** by Jack Tregaer of Brisbane High School
- ***Leaf in a Hurricane*** by Ali Shahmoradi of Baulkham Hills high School, NSW
- ***Responsibility...is up to you and me!*** By Eloise Brown of Mansfield State High School
- ***Stolen Souls*** by Olivia Harrison of Mount Eliza Secondary College
- ***Stand up Straight, Terrorists Don't Slouch*** by Alishba Khan of Mansfield State High School