

Poems winners of the Competition on Poetry and Psychoanalysis 2022:

‘NOSCE TE ISPUM’ – KNOW YOURSELF

1. **Glass Shards** by Edna Heled

Very powerful and authentic - a really eloquent expression of the most difficult of our emotions – anger; and the way it ended, with no solution or resolution, just living with the pain.

2. **Afterglow** by Art Johnstone

The author painted the painful pictures of childhood and the bitter disappointment of a child who was never a priority for the adults around her/him. The impact of adult sexuality on the child came through very powerfully.

3. **“You thought maybe you were too broken”** by Crispin Balfour

It is a tender and beautiful description of love and relationship, aging and the reality of human relationships. Coming to terms with limitations.

Nominations:

- **Just a Paper Moon** by Art Johnstone for its poignant evocation of a child who has been let down by adults.
- **I Know I Wonder** by Tim Gray for its musicality and articulation of the ‘not knowing’ stance.
- **Sweaty fingers** by Andi Podesta for its vivid and painful description of the impact of childhood experiences later on in life, and for its humour!

Further information on:

The New Zealand Institute of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (NZIPP) Website
<http://www.psychotherapy.co.nz/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/New-Zealand-Institute-of-Psychoanalytic-Psychotherapy-704667686334359>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nzipp-nz-institute-psychoanalytic-psychotherapy-4b0b18231/>

And on Phantom National Poetry Day Website:

<https://www.nzbookawards.nz/national-poetry-day/calendar-of-events/#auckland>

<https://www.nzbookawards.nz/national-poetry-day/competition-calendar/>



Glass Shards

There was nothing there, but rage

pure rage
I would say... spectacular rage

enough to make us stop breathing

no! In fact, it made us breath deeper
look lost at each other

actually look not at each other
look sideways
cringed
ashamed.

see, we had no idea what the rage was about
we were inside, it happened outside
we were just in close proximity
to the rage
close enough to feel rebuked
even though it wasn't our rage

no, not ours
not at all

we couldn't even hear much
let alone understand
but it clawed us
penetrated our pores
writhed around our necks
toxic, obnoxious, monstrous rage

we were within the radius
we had no choice
but to own to it
one way or another

it was foggy, shadowy
no visibility
no way we could see

but we took it with us to bed
we woke up with it in the morning
we roamed the streets with it
we flew the skies
we made friends with it
obscene, ferocious rage
our potion
sweet
viscid
poison

ours
to keep now

never to give away

Edna Heled

Afterglow

'When I arrived in your life.

Were you ever curious;

or just suspicious,

of what I might be?'...

why all of those salesmen, wanted your company.

And why was your God selling you lies, like my father had done with his come-to-bed eyes.

And the car salesman who got right into your head,
with cheap deals and his promises; fast sex in your bed.

And four weeks later did you not think,
about the words on their contracts, the fast-drying-ink,
as seductions sweet stories were puked down the sink.

Meanwhile

The Vicar on Sunday was feeding you lines,
through an unbuttoned cassock, cheap bread and cheap wine,
when you finally saw the truth in his eyes; the vows in his Church? Just him:
selling more lies.

Now all you have left of their promises Stale-Stink.

Are some words on a contract,
in invisible ink.

And me....

still wondering.

'When I arrived in your life.

Were you ever curious,

or just suspicious,

of what I might be...?'

Art Johnstone

For Piri

You thought maybe you were too broken
And I said no you are not broken

But neither are true
We are all broken
You
Me
Everyone Is Broken

That's how it is to be human
I think
I can see
How many times
You have been broken
It echoes around inside me
When I am with you

Now

When I am with you
It seems I always am
The smell of your shoulder
As we hugged goodbye
Your smile
Those eyes of yours
Life's traces at the corners
That your father noticed
And I noticed as I sat beside you

For the first time

There is always a first time
We are broken
And it echoes inside us

Forever

But sometimes
We might just be able
To repair these breaks
These savage chaotic cracks
Within
Mend them
And when we do
We become stronger
Wiser
More human
And the healing shapes us
Draws in the detail
With a steady pen

That might be why
I love you so.

Crispin Balfour

Just a Paper moon

I am not afraid to turn
Confront those things that trouble me.
Like the faces of my past.
Trusted faces; trusted people.
Lift the veil and ask them;
Why? Why tell a child those things?
Betray a future.
I could never be enough for you.
Match your narrow dream.
Perfection.
To confound you.
I tell you.
She is here. The girl I lost because you lied.
She has travelled with me.
Hidden; In my heart.
Not for spite.
For love.
It has taken all my life to understand.
To see her rainbow at my feet.
Too long I fought your battles,
Used false valour.
My hollow victory was your objective.
Loyalty.
And when the armistice came
you never stopped to ask me.
'What of your dream?'
So here I am.
The eleventh hour of the eleventh day.
You left the battlefield long ago,
Your victory secured.
And that dream I had?
Just a paper moon.

Art Johnstone

I Know I Wonder

Time after time we like to see rhyme
Though no two lives will ere be like mine.
Twins, triplets, quads are seeming alike
Though one an angel, another a tyke.
Comfort we take in knowing what's coming next
Though it's never the same, are we too vexed?
Change we accept from moment to moment,
We take in our stride without undue foment.

Time after time we like to see rhyme
Though time after time we miss the sublime.
It's Monday, five, time to go home,
What the journey cannot be afore known.
Will you be bored, like each, every day
Or will you be stopped going on your way?
A calamitous time, soon to unfold,
That you, in no way, could have foretold.

Day after day, to some, seems the same
But each moment will never ever come again.
To some, year on year, things seem to repeat
Though each seeming cycle, its own special treat.
Each winter snows, flowers bloom in the spring,
No two flowers the same, no same two birds sing.
The rhythm of life, the hailed powerful beat,
New treasures in store each moment will greet.

Day after day, to some, seems the same,
What be the weather? Will it shine? Will it rain?
No two rain drops fall in the same spot
No two days sun is always equally hot.
Each moment brings its own treasure trove
No two moments the same in the field or the grove.
A seeming rhythm that seems to repeat
Unfortunately nature is not quite that neat.

Some like to think that they're in control,
An idea that is both sad and is quite droll.
Only after the fact can you decide
If reactions from random events will collide.
That is not to say all is totally random
As controlled and uncontrolled both work in tandem,
Which leaves us to say that you cannot know
But can only wonder what will be so.

Tim Gray

Sweaty fingers

Piano lessons for an awkward 8-year-old
Nervousness ruled supreme
The puddles left on the keys
Made the old teacher scream
She'd wipe with her tatty grey rag
And shout at me in between
'you'll never amount to a real pianist'
was her favourite curse on me
We moved town, piano stayed
A huge void remained
If I could meet that old woman one more time
the things I would say.
"Not every child dreams of being a big star"
"Appreciation of music, acceptance of being"
Or maybe "stuff you! I'm getting a guitar!"

Andi Podesta