Poetry Competition – National Poetry Day - 28 August 2026

Poetry and Psychoanalysis on: "*find the place that always waits*" Sarah Broom, Tigers at Awhitu, 2010 (Auckland University Press)

A huge thank you to all the participants who have submitted their poems to this year's competition:

Anna Te-Aroha
Cameron Holloway
Dani Hockings
Delia Tastard
Edna Heled
Kendall Stewart
Kirsten Warner
Lily Wisteria
Lincoln Jaques
Marie Franklin
Ngaio Balfour
Raewyn Alexander
René Harrison

Poetry Competition final results:

1. Immured by *Delia Tastard*

This poem was awarded First Place for its gorgeously sumptuous detail**,** potent imagery, and beautifully accomplished language**.** Its verse form perfectly lent itself to the content and emotional heart of the poem, giving it strength and dignity. The poem was also described as generous, among its many other striking qualities.

2. Horizon by *Lincoln Jaques*

This poem was awarded Second Place for its powerful central image of the coffee sack, which vividly captured an atmosphere of loss and despair. The poem is beautifully done**,** stunningly beautiful and heart-wrenching all at once**.**

3. Flows to the Sea by *Kirsten Warner*

This poem was awarded Third Place for its superb imagery, culminating in a final image described as masterful: the sunlight *"pooling buttery like the tiger who ran in circles until he melted."*

Special mention:

- *Coffee with Balzac* by Lincoln Jaques is so filled with imagery. I love this poem; it captures Balzac's cheeky humour.
- *Puja Point* by Marie Franklin is kind and unassuming, like someone taking you by the hand on a river walk; it is an emotionally intense account of a departure, matching the internal state of the poet with the surrounding nature.
- *Brother* by Kirsten Warner: A very moving poem that contains a wonderful portrait of the person described and gives voice to the poignancy and tragedy of the situation.
- *Foreigner* by Lincoln Jaques: really appreciated the skill and imagery of all three of Lincoln Jaques' poems. They are beautifully paced and evocative.
- *Indigo Tree* by Dani Hockings

All the poems for which we receive permission to publish online.

Horizon by *Lincoln Jaques*

From the shore
the line of horizon
resembles a ledge
to be gripped onto
as the world turns over.

When he was a child
men came to my father's
door, they gave him a bag
an old coffee sack
inside was his father's heart
they said, *be careful, boy,*
don't stare at the moon too long.

He never slept well after that
he kept the coffee sack
but the heart within hardened
like a petrified bit of swamp Kauri.
He never looked at the moon again.

Years later I found the sack
the inside empty
the heart torn out
now I stand on the
water's edge and look at
that horizon and my hands
grip onto air
knowing horizons don't
exist they have only been invented
to set a boundary to ourselves.

Flows to the sea by *Kirsten Warner*

Crossing such a big river is risky,
churning white water could sink a boat of memories.

On the far shore is childhood,
people mostly friendly although my brothers
sometimes knuckle my upper arm,
and when my parents yell in each other's faces,
the distance between them is just enough for me
to slip between, upset so my nose bleeds.

I am approaching the delta, an islet
where I sit awake in my cot
the end of a hot day, sunlight through curtains
pooling buttery like the tiger
who ran in circles until he melted.

Coffee with Balzac by *Lincoln Jaques*

I did not think today would be any different
up at 5, reading Balzac, dreading weak coffee
thinking back 20 years and the addiction to cigarettes.

I did not think today would be any worse
than yesterday, or the day before, when
the sun never showed until gone 7, and the
fog refused to clear and the car wouldn't start.

And still sitting well past 8 and not a line written
I consider taking up smoking again…smoking
gives you that look of a poet, of a real writer
even though you haven't written a word in a week.

Eventually the sun finally bursts the fog
and the same fat blackbird brings superstitious
coincidences in the form of small deaths thrown in
through the window, where I sit before a cold coffee
and an Olivetti with a stuck key.

By lunchtime, when all's doomed, the sun lifts
its head and winks at me through a fist of cloud
and a finger of light illuminates the distant field
to where a cedar grows from a seed dropped
to the earth 100 years or more ago,
from perhaps a wandering minstrel's pocket.

Foreigner by *Lincoln Jaques*

I wake up in a strange place
things aren't where they're supposed to be
the bird calling to the sun is different
not the same one that sits outside
my window at home in the Cypress
who seems to know me by name and calls it

people move about the building their
footsteps are not the ones I remember
someone bangs a door switches on the
washing machine it's early but already
people are being paid to do things

the landscape is different the grass needs
cutting the flax just outside the door swings
as if in the hands of a Samurai I can't go out
I'm too afraid to go out. I tell these things
to myself. I'm not a child anymore but being
in strange places reduces you to childish instincts

I get up, finally, when the smell of coffee
becomes irresistible, peek out into the hallway
but noone's there. How much longer can I
continue to feel like a foreigner? And then I
remember that my father told me we are
all strangers to one another even he and I
at the end.

Puja Point by *Marie Franklin*

A stroll to Puja Point
I sat by the brook trickling
Breathing in; The flow is in me.
The gushing of the river further down
The river flows as do my tears.
I didn't want you to die.
I know I learnt of life and death, just didn't want it yet;
and not this lesson with your death.
But here it is
And where have you gone?
I wondered with an outcry.
Further along crossing the stream again
Thru ferns and stones
I came upon a Kereru
I must have frightened you
But there you were
Flew on a high branch
Perched up there

Looking down on me
Just as your final days were; on a throne of sorts,
attended to by all;
In your true glory Mam
You touched us all.
Your exquisite kindness, greetings to all,
and grace with your fate,
as you walked it tall.
Your hair was like mine, silver and falling back off your face
You were Beautiful and noble;
We were proud of your courage to go there:
three days and three nights we stayed with you Mam
until you passed over.

Indigo Tree by *Dani Hockings*

Air moves over my arms–
a thin shield for the ache.

Blood trickles down–
my leg
simmering, silent.

Is it mine? I do not know—
but does it matter,
not now.

Not until I find him.

In the indigo tree
I keep still,
turning my thoughts from him.

Above the shifting crowd,
I wait for a moment
small enough to enter.

Climbing down I look–
and choose.

He stands two steps forward,
waiting—
though he does not know it.

Why doesn't he move,
why can't he see me coming?

It's not him. He's not him.

My breath knots—
Loosens.

The indigo tree
calls me back
into its shadow,

where I can wait again–
unnoticed.

The Odd One Out by *Dani Hockings*

You say it's all the same,
that no one is loved more—
but I've learned to notice
where your attention lands first.

Don't worry, I get it,
just like you always hoped I would—
my mask hides all the hate,
but please don't forget the scrapes under it.

holidays, barbeques, train rides, dinners—

I act as you wish,
all giddy, gracious, gifted,
when really all I am
is ghostly, ghastly, and grim.

I used to think it was obvious—
the way I fade beside them.
But maybe I learned how to disappear
before you ever looked.

Nobody sees beneath the mask,
the one I hold onto so dearly—
I think I've learned to wear it
even when no one is looking.

And still, you stand there as if I don't.

Shore of Severance by *Dani Hockings*

Silence met me—
pulling me toward
the shore of severance,
then drawing me back.

I waited–
still, soundless.

Nobody could see—
or nobody cared to,
yet I was trying again.

I'm here for her–
her name held ahead—
in the glistening light.

I longed to be with her–
for her to see me
seeing her.

But alone I stood,
my hands trembling
in the empty air
where the light won't land.

Her sunlight is my sunlight;
without that warmth,
I can wait and wait–

I fade with the light,
unseen.

Kisses and blue memories by *Lily Wisteria*

1.

I was once living with you
In a spare room,
Happily waiting
For the next day to arrive.

Till one day,
You said: "I'm fine"
And I said: "it's fine"
To go on separate ways.

Let's forget it all
Pretend it was only a dream,
A beautiful dream.

2.

Sparkling days
Back in minds,
Enlightening my heart.

I can see you,
Back with me,
Walking around,

Like unspoken words
Going round and round,
in hollow circles.

3.

The dream is now gone,
As if it never was.

That's the power of the mind:

To make it disappear
What once it was so vivid,
So live
So alive.

Back Home by *Kendall Stewart*

Where are those ruby red slippers
To click together

Home?
Where is that now?

A place of kindness and including
That country of the free and brave

An opportunity of graces to call
Even if simply an illusion
It was the optics

No grandstanding toddlers
Wielding power over the tall
Tantrums, bullying, hyperbole, contradictions
Falsities, name calling, finger shaming, lies

Lies lies lies lies lies

Great, or somewhat great empires do fall

Home?
Where is that now?

Women feared, belittled, made small
Freedoms snatched, liberties lauded
Differences spurned into hurled ammunitions

Culture, class, race, gender, beliefs, appearance, family, interests, politics
Loaded for the next round

Into a box with you
And we will take your job too

Home?
Where is that now?
When I click these slippers
Where will I stand?
Home?
Or some wide unforgiving, unrelenting, unbearable land?

We gotta lift by *Kendall Stewart*

Women!
Listen here
It's time to look
Look deeply into
Ourselves and
Each other
We gotta say
THIS, sis, is hard!
Like brutal
Like a never ending
Storm of swirling

Shit
We get it
We do
One foot on the ladder
One foot in the kitchen
One foot in the bedroom
One foot out the door
And one in Timbuktu
Wait!
We dont got four legs
We only ever had two
THIS, sis, is exhausting!
Youre their number one
Who?
The men
The kids
The work
The parents
For the freaking world
THIS, sis
This is too much!
We can only do it
Together
We gotta lift each other up
Grab my hand
Ill grab yours too
Look me in my eye, sis
I got you
And i know
You got me too

Enough by *Kendall Stewart*

When should enough be enough
Is this enough?
Are you enough?
Does this new thing make us worth enough?
My plate is not full
My plate is overflowing
My plate is empty
But empty can be enough
While overflowing is never enough
One mans enough is anothers scraps
One mans plenty is anothers too little
Where does enough reside and where does it fall
Was I taught that this was enough?
Was I shown what enough could be?
When I fall short of enough does someone celebrate
When I exceed enough why do I feel like more
There should be enough for us all
And yet
There is
Not enough
Not ever
Enough.

The Eye of the Heart by *Marie Franklin*

What more is there to say
except my heart misses yours everyday
Like the sky misses the dappled clouds drawn across its vast expanse,
Like the sky misses its blue; the depth of blue that brings Peace
Like the ponga misses their fronds unfurling with new beginnings
The grass the morning dew.
The valley, the mist as the sun shines upon a brand new day
A New dawn
I pray for this for us my love.
I pray that this is us.
This beauty I see here
The landscape rolling vast expanse.
The glimpse of the sea
The greenery against the blue
Illuminated by the sun
Glistening from the rain
from the thunderstorm last night
And the Peace of God today
The river gushing in the distance;
the tui calls; Fantails flitter
the leaves waving gently but no breeze.
Here is beauty beyond everything
Stillness in my heart and peace breathing.

Our Parting Glass by *Marie Franklin*

I sat in paradise for one last goodbye.
You swooped above so full of love.
Perched again so camouflaged.
You stayed; I kept quiet lest you move
And we felt each other close.
Then I walked on, leaving you in Paradise,
And then the bell tolled
And I went back to life here on Earth:
Our paths separating again.

Mise Recordia by *Anna Te-Aroha Rogers*

For a dying friend
I cannot believe,
You are going
Angry that we are losing you,
As you fly,
To a time out of memory,
Leaving in your wake,
A huge, gaping hole.

You are going,
Where we cannot follow,

Where our love cannot reach,
Where our love, entreaties and prayers
Can no longer hold you.

Fly free precious friend,
Find peace at last,
Having first taught us how to live.
Dying..... it is now today.

(to Linda precious friend).

Silent Voice (A testimony of elder abuse) by *Anna Te-Aroha Rogers*
20/9/25

Mine,

Is the silent voice, The
one,
You don't hear; In
this silent, Now alien
house.

For I,

Don't speak anymore,
Silenced..... I daren't;
For fear of giving offence,
Arousing the invader.

Even the slightest thing, The
smallest difference, Mine is the
silent voice The one
You no longer hear.

For Renee Good & Alex Pretti by *Anna Te-Aroha Rogers*
29/1/26

They have murdered,

The American dream.....murderers...cowards Yet to be
held to account.

Their brutality backed,
By official lies.
Lies,
That slander heroes
Compound families' grief;
They have turned
The American Dream
Into an American Nightmare.

While their lie goes around the world,
From a country that now kills it citizens
And imprisons its children.

lEarth's surface was once completely ocean by *Raewyn Alexander*

my inspiration lays future-rich eggs in such stories
uplifting expenses to ease or whip through trouble
while cuddles translated fine into close unwinding
one another surely trying to capture the moon - laughing
as we dodge now crowded noisy blues for closeness
yes - since zygotes our DNA made us many new fit
patterns and survivors suitable for particular futures
each in human tides and weather – then with chances
as much alive here as electric eels or microbes
while love weather changes without forecast but feels
unbelievable and as natural too as any weather here
naturally in our own worlds with this spinning all around

plans appear like saviours here by *Raewyn Alexander*

relaxing careful now - sweeter scoped soon found ready
for structure – wishing impossible hopes will acrobat fine there
perfectly we may pick and choose anyway mysteriously
whatever the latest blend or heels or vehicle or vision may be
suitable or not - while all along some appliances hum
now and then – me wary of love but muddling on or aglow
breathing necessary even if nervous – good plans huddle
we tell each other news and true stories including wishes
usually playful sometimes a storm - intervals
altogether fun messy but neat for decades unbelievably in touch
you and I here wishing under totally different skies
and debating and fearful through many dramatic or still ums
then in between “whatevers” as quizzical as birds ha!
traffic nearby shushing along at a distance like we too hide in
while dialogue suits us this late and feeling early catching on better
e only way we progress a famous writer stated in his book
concerning Western Civilisation – where we settle like mist or...?
to and fro experts in conference you a lizard and me a shark
ancient somewhat scary and probably dangerous at times
looking for signs of compatibility just after midnight here
to shape words into a spell form of liveliness focussed
you often think my muddles amusing so laugh it up stormy
another linguistic misunderstanding before the apocalypse
jokes about danger however are not ever better than kissing
flirting's part of my culture French ancestors told me oui
supposedly this kind of conversation's not at all a proposal tho'
it's Icing on a cake that's not tall poppy nor revolutionary
mixing metaphors to bring in questions and some mystery
seeing what flies and where this lands now we have license

the astrolabe some astronomers directed long ago by *Raewyn Alexander*

towards star-gazing searching night skies for clues
hysterically possibly finding new astral bodies lit up wishes
navigators and astrologers measuring celestial elements
altitudes too - determining local time and latitude useful
“Love is God's astrolobe” a famous poet before now wrote
quite a star himself lately in many books – Rumi is global

our most plagiarised poet - a shocked writer friend told me
while I map night skies here in odd dream-states only
to find loving visions best to redress bare hope warmer
preferring to see love as safe when really I fancy kindness
you I believe reading me kind of like a map or timetable
but do stars in your moonless dark-sky eyes distract you?
as clever as any logical planner - plain rich talent – I see
me crying tears of ambiguous loss – you're far away
cycling in sunlight with closer futures imagined there?
or releasing fear of cruelty brimming desire avoiding icy rain?
easier to imagine plain pictures but not now - tomorrow
probability and other calculations quite a wow gamble here
distance brings in emails mystery and tight guesswork
then we're not as simple as objects in the sky nor any finery
loving to be alone with enough handy ready to make lines up
all through aiming to be storybook characters maybe
we're easier plotted and copied edited then printed – bound
read and understood then laid aside to soon fondly recall?
but fresh feelings rise up into plans real smart then uh oh
wanting ever after off all colourful pages and in there now

*Thank you to the **National Poetry Day***

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Organising Committee:

Mary Farrell	Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist in private practice. She is a published author and poet originally from the UK. She has been living, working and writing in Aotearoa for the last 30 years.
Cindy Zeiher	Poet and academic, and has completed her Clinical Training in Psychoanalysis with the New Zealand Clinic for Lacanian Analysis (CLA). Her poetry has been published both in New Zealand and internationally. She is currently one of the writers in residence at the Physics Room Contemporary Art Space, where she is focusing on a poetry collection dedicated to and inspired by the experimental art of Joanna Margaret Paul, exploring themes of womanhood, space, and temporality.
Elizabeth Welsh	Poet, essayist and academic editor. She is currently undertaking the Clinical Training in Psychoanalysis with the New Zealand Clinic for Lacanian Analysis (CLA). Her poetry has been published widely, both in New Zealand and internationally. She was artist-in-residence at Awhitu Regional Park in 2021, creating poetry and handmade paper inspired by, and from, the regenerating wetlands. Her first book of poetry, *Over there a Mountain*, was published by Makaro Press in 2018. She is currently working on a book of poetic essays on mourning.
Gloriana Bartoli	Psychoanalyst and psychoanalyst psychotherapist, with a background in Clinical Psychology, working in private practice in Auckland. Member and current Director of Training of The New Zealand Institute of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (NZIPP); originally from Italy, with interest and passion for art, literature, movies, and poetry.