

## POETRY PAMPHLET AWARD 2023

Once again, it's been a delight to read the huge range of poetry pamphlets submitted and we would like to thank everyone who supported the Poetry Pamphlet Award. We take very seriously the fact that writers put huge effort and emotion into their work and we really appreciate your trust and patience.

The pamphlet award is always one of the highlights of the Cinnamon year and this year was no exception. We had almost 500 entrants and a lot of very high quality writing. There were so many pamphlets that almost made it to the longest and even at this stage we had a lot of hard decisions to make. We found ourselves rereading, looking for the freshness of the imagery and the pressure on every word. If your work is on the longlist it's because it's strong, engaging and well-written.

There was a great deal of poetry that would have made it even further in other years, but we are definitely noticing a rise in standards every year.

There are 52 pamphlets on the longlist and all of them were convincing.

Shanta Acharya

Anne Babbs

Anne Bateman

Veronica Beedham

Valerie Bence

G W Colkitto

Gay Grace

Barbara Cumbers

Lesley Curwen

Kelly Davis (Conversation with my father)

Rachel Davies

Lorna Dowell

Hannah Drury

Anne Dunford

Jennifer Edwards

Marie-Louise Eyres

Sara Falkstad

Zora Field

Lindsay Fursland  
Katharine Goda  
Susan E Holland  
Susan Jordan  
Emily Jundi  
Jane Kingsford  
Annie Kissack  
Christine Knight  
Camilla Lambert  
Alison Lock  
Sarah Macleod (A Winged Horse Called Woebegone)  
Jo Mariner (Step Ready)  
Jane McLaughlin  
Bert Molsom (At the Water's Edge)  
Christopher North  
David Olsen  
Liliana Pasterska  
Geraldine Paine  
Elisabeth Pike  
Helen Pizzey  
Estill Pollock  
Sue Proffitt  
Ellie Rees  
Marilyn Ricci  
Bill Richardson  
Belinda Rimmer  
Amber Rollinson  
Laura Seymour

Anne Stewart

Vivienne Tregenza

Gail Webb

Anne Marie Wells

Jane Wheeler

Marjory Woodfield

But we had to hone down further. We were looking for poetry that kept us reading, that was giving us a new perspective or insight without didacticism. We were looking for those turns of phrase that are arresting and lucid and for imagery that we wished we'd written ourselves. We whittled down to 16 pamphlets on the shortlist and then the really difficult task of sifting further.

Inevitably, there is an element of the subjective here and certainly all 16 were of publishable standard, as were many others on the longlist. This is always the point when we take a break from reading so we can return with fresh eyes. And this is always the point at which we're aware that decisions can turn on such fragile things. If you made it this far your work deserves to be out in the world—keep knocking on doors. The 16 shortlisted poets were:

Valerie Bence

David Calcutt

G W Colkitto

Rachel Davies

Anne Dunford

Jennifer Edwards

Lindsay Fursland

Jane McLaughlin

David Olsen

Liliana Pasterska

Geraldine Paine

Estill Pollock

Laura Seymour

Anne Stewart

Vivienne Tregenza

Anne Marie Wells

We narrowed the shortlist down to 6 finalists and at this point we were looking for poetry that made us hold our breath or delivered epiphanies, however small or quiet. We were looking for poetry that gave us space as readers, that made us do some work and had depth, but wasn't obscure. And we were looking for poets with distinctive voices—writers whose images are precise, whose language is supple, who delighted us on second and third reading...

Congratulations to all six:

Anne Bateman—*Tattvas*

David Calcutt — *Toilers in the Fields of Stone*

G W Colkitto — *Crown of Thorns*

Laura Seymour — *Jupiter is Shrinking*

Anne Stewart — *Writing in the Dark*

Anne Marie Wells — *Mother (v)*

*Tattvas* by Anne Bateman takes us on journeys, both geographical and emotional. The images are vivid and resonant. There's a strong sense of connections, whether to land or people, communicated with phrases that made us hold our breath as we read.

*Toilers in the Fields of Stone* by David Calcutt begins with a prose poem and ends with a short prose piece, bracketing lyrical pieces which sing off the page. Here there are visiting creatures, woods that are alive and sacred, a spell-making hare, insects, birds and stories of land and stars that work together to immerse us in other ways of seeing.

*Crown of Thorns* by G W Colkitto is a playful yet erudite take on sonnets and not sonnets. Layered with references that are used to hold a mirror to the self, and with an astute focus on the business of writing poetry itself, this is a deft, intelligent, witty collection delivered with a lightness of touch.

*Jupiter is Shrinking* by Laura Seymour brims with wit and imagination. Linguistically supple and full of surprises, the reader is immersed in a surreal world where nothing is ever what it seems, confronted by questions of how we make meaning in a bizarre world.

*Writing in the Dark* by Anne Stewart is a highly accomplished collection with a deep emotional resonance, a keen sense of humour. The poems are conversational, fluid and intriguing, raising the quotidian to moments of epiphany.

*Mother (v)* by Anne Marie Wells is formally distinctive and beautifully honed. Reflective, precise and poignant, this is honest, exquisitely realised poetry exploring fertility with a freshness and intelligence that draws the reader in deeply.

How do you go from six pamphlets that each merit publication in different ways, to choosing two? Well, we didn't quite make it, so we went for three winners, but it was still immensely difficult. Reading aloud always becomes important at this stage. How do the words feel and taste in the mouth? Where do the poems take us? What experiences beyond our own are we invited into? And which voices resonate with our list at Cinnamon

Press? We love work that allows the images to make new meaning, that is bright on the eye and uses language skilfully and effectively. All six did this, but we needed to make a decision. It wasn't easy

Huge congratulations to the three poets whose pamphlets will be published next spring:

Anne Bateman — *Tattvas*

G W Colkitto — *Crown of Thorns*

Anne Marie Wells — *Mother (v)*