

FIRST PRIZE

Bronte Parsonage 2024

by Karen Schwartz

Flame trapped gold under glass,
Feeding on air till air is gone.
Yet light breaks out to blind.
Shining, splendid, coruscating.
Burning words from burning worlds
The sisters built from such thin air.

Thorn trees, stark granite, rocks rasping.
Stone walls cut bare hills like old scars.
Winds howl mourning voices.
Mossy headstones. The dead press close.
Bounds tighter than steel corsets,
A bleak prison to set them free.

I stretch cold hands towards ghost flame.
The fire blazes forth.

SECOND PRIZE

My Mother's Tongue

by Helga Parl

Like winter woollens on a spring day I put my
mother's tongue away.
Then, sixty years later I needed to
use it.

I said that the moths had
Their fun and abused it.

I blamed the moths But to be fair
It was lazy me That didn't care.

I knew one must exercise Body and brain
To keep limbs supple, Refresh
speech again.

My mother's tongue is not that hard But I will get
rid of unwanted lard.

ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD

beyond the rainbow serpent

By Mocco Wollert

lost river highway stubbornly going somewhere traversing the amber
sea of forgotten landscapes
death a brown shroud embroidered with withered plants fire destroying
releasing hidden sky shelters
life coming forth from the burning ground

yellow dawn rises out of space uncharted rivers reflecting endless
horizons life forces floating above imagined burned rainbow colours
skeletons crushed to bone-white pebbles pretending to be a billabong where
ancient reptiles bathe
at midnight pulling opaque veils over their eyes

white gums look best under blue moons or glowing
in the soft hours of dawn first smoke rising pretending to be giant ghost trees in
shining silver armour
heat has its own hue deepened by floating shadows while the towers of
white life brittle stalwarts stand sentry unerringly turned northwards

there is no end to infinite horizons only illusions as heat stretches the
mottled skin of the earth giant giant Bindi eyes dot the burnished grass
telling the dreamtime serpent guardian of the land to glide with care
through ancient songs and stories