



**WRITE  
AROUND  
THE  
MURRAY**

**RIVER OF STORIES  
WINNING ENTRIES  
SECONDARY POETRY  
2022**

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**YEAR 7-8 CATEGORY**

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**Year 7-8 Winner:** Jack Takacs[Murray High School]

**Title:** *Under No Flag*

Through all the smoke and haze,  
All the houses set ablaze,  
Over the cindering burnt out hill,  
All the men were sent to kill,  
Through the darkness and despair,  
The overseer lay in his lair,  
Though unpunished, still unforgiven,  
Nevertheless all are driven,  
Behind each man is adrenaline and fury,  
The injured men scream "medic please cure me",  
The ones sent home had put up a fight,  
The ones still out there freezing at night,  
Some of them were pitched, upon the wall,  
The ones on the inside mindlessly brawled,  
Blood and rage fuelled by encounter,  
As realisation sets in there was no banter,  
Over the horizon the sun rises high,  
But so do their scopes all sit and lie,  
The helmets are dull and so are their faces,  
Watching them seer familiar places,  
As the souls raise, to the sky,  
Sorrow sets in, they all want to die,  
Waiting for an initial haste,  
All of their prayers have gone to waste,  
Going to war leaves more than a scar,  
But when they get home it's all just charr,  
Now they're cornered, there's nowhere to turn,  
Now they all wish they were adjourn,  
Over the seas to adventure they said,  
Now all the men are lying on their deathbed.

**Year 7-8 Runner-Up:** Alyse Collins [Murray High School]

**Title:** *You are my Passion*

As we sit under the cherry blossom trees  
Your beautiful hair flows in the breeze  
Your eyes light up like a star in the sky  
Their deep shades make me feel as if I could fly  
I don't know why I feel this way  
But there is something about you that makes me okay

What I'm about to say might frighten you  
It took a lot of thought figuring out how to share this with you  
Please, oh please do not be scared  
For the happiness you bring me must be shared

When I am with you I feel alive  
A kind of alive that makes my heart thrive  
And as I sit with you in my nice cozy coat  
Words of affection begin to bubble in my throat

The truth is that I am in love with you  
And I'm hoping that maybe you like me too  
If you don't like me back then that is okay  
I will still be your friend and I'll push my feelings away  
But if by any chance you love me too  
Don't hide your feelings even if you don't know what to do

My love is so crazy you may think it is strange  
Even if it is, it's not going to change  
You are so beautiful you deserve the best  
And for some reason my heart just simply won't rest

You may be wondering why I didn't share this love with you straight away

The fact is I don't want our friendship to fray  
When you read this poem my love will be set free  
Even if you don't feel the same way about me

I have been in love for you for quite some time  
It almost seems natural to express love with a rhyme  
I have the most fun when you smile and laugh  
And when you tell me a joke and make me laugh

So there you have it I have revealed the truth  
And now the rest is up to you  
Will you love me and feel the same way  
Or will you tell me to push my passion away?

**Year 7-8 Runner-Up:** Charlie Pinard [Catholic College Wodonga]**Title:** *In my Honest Opinion*

In my honest opinion  
High School should be fun  
We should love it  
Cherish it  
And anything  
But dread it

In my honest opinion  
In High school  
Girls shouldn't have to skip meals  
Ignore their aching bodies  
And hurt themselves  
To compensate  
For everything inside

In my honest opinion  
In High School  
Girls shouldn't have to wear low cut tops  
And masks of makeup  
Flaunt themselves to be treated  
Like a precious artifact  
Because nothing else is normal

But in High School  
Nothing is 'normal'

In my honest opinion  
In High School  
I shouldn't look in the mirror  
And instead of loving myself  
Hate every inch of me  
That I can absorb  
Because I am not like  
Other girls

But in High School  
Who are the other girls?

In my honest opinion  
In High School  
Girls should wear their good grades  
Like armour  
They should smile  
Not duck their head down  
And try not to be noticed

In my honest opinion  
 Girls should be recognised for being them  
 And everything on the outside?  
 It shouldn't matter!  
 We are us.  
 People are people are people.

In my honest opinion:  
 High School masks us  
 But why?  
 Why don't we blossom?

## YEAR 9-10 CATEGORY

**Year 9-10 Winner:** Abbey Quinlan [Victory Lutheran College]

**Title:** Changing the Story: A Revolution

The orchestra of trees, the breeze its conductor.  
 The leaves begin a sweet *ostinato*<sup>i</sup>, soft and perpetual.  
 The Cicadas become the pounding drums, ceaseless and familiar.  
 The soloist emerges, swift in flight, hues of green, blue, red and yellow.  
 The soprano leads the pleasing melody of the evening movement.  
 The piece reaches its dramatic climax, and then drifts into a gradual *morendo*<sup>ii</sup>.  
 The wind's sudden stillness marks the transition.  
 The *deceptive cadence*<sup>iii</sup> echoes softly on the moss-covered rocks.  
 The Sulphur-Crested Cockatoos screech their approval (with their usual lack of intonation).  
 The Kookaburras just laugh.

The night is the curtain, shrouding the symphony in darkness.  
 The vocalist retreats, as the threatening bark of the Sugar Glider pierces the stillness.  
 The lights appear, and from their direction emanates a new type of music.  
 The machines cast a steady overture of death and destruction.  
 The ancient tree hollows begin a mournful refrain.  
 The melancholy harmony of despair and grief echoes unendingly.  
 The swift parrot vulnerable in the sunrise, struggles to play its solo again.  
 The opus growing softer, the last lines of music approaching with each fall.  
 The final bars, however, are yet to be written; a *Tierce de Picardie*<sup>iv</sup> may still be composed.  
 The *coda*<sup>v</sup> may give rise to a new theme, *con gran spirito*<sup>vi</sup>, (if we will it).

And if not, our silent longing for revolution will float across the plains  
 A perpetual *sostenuto*<sup>vii</sup>- sempre

<sup>i</sup> A short, repeated musical phrase.

<sup>ii</sup> 'dying away'(becoming softer and slower)

<sup>iii</sup> Two musical chords used to extend a melodic phrase.

<sup>iv</sup> A major chord used in the final chord of a piece of music in the minor mode.

<sup>v</sup> Concluding section of a piece of music.

<sup>vi</sup> 'With great spirit'.

<sup>vii</sup> To be sustained beyond a notes true value.

**Year 9-10 Runner-Up:** Jericho Ellao [The Scots School, Albury]

**Title:** *The Unfathomable Pond*

Submerged within his frozen thoughts,  
Concealed, yet dwelling in his desires  
Amongst sombre voids, and starlit waters  
And evergreen woodland fires

'Why am I ever so small?'  
He cries to the man on the moon,  
The waters are violent, then silence creeps  
Upon the stunning starlight lagoon

He craves to be renowned, and saunter the world  
Of smaller things that can be harnessed  
Abnormalities lurk, and wanderers weep  
Where untameable storms are harmless

'Come, let us journey  
Beyond the craters, rocks and gloom  
Let us battle, rest, and venture beyond  
the dark side of the moon'

Replied the man with a lonesome voice  
Crafting a starlight boat  
Flicking his staff, bearing decades of sorcery  
The moon man set afloat

With his boat of starlight  
He journeyed through celestial voids  
Arriving on the vast lands of the earth  
He awaited their departure

'Well', bellowed the moon man  
Gazing toward a stary abyss  
The boy stepped out onto the boat  
And they began sailing astral seas

Their eyes were fixed beyond the earth  
'This is where the cold clays of the moon slept  
Beholding ages upon ages of enchantment,  
And I am the last one left'

Amongst the stellar voids, above boundless urbanities  
Between the gloomy crevices of space  
A frozen star awaits their arrival  
Unfound, untouched, unknown

'Why am I ever so small?'  
He cries to the man on the moon,  
The waters are violent, then silence creeps  
Upon the stunning starlight lagoon

The moon man gazed at the galaxial ocean  
And admired the earth beyond  
"It is better to be a small and curious fish  
floating amongst the biggest of ponds"

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**Year 9-10 Runner-Up:** Amelia Roberts [Wangaratta High School]

**Title:** *Regret*

The cloudy mind,  
That dreamt of returning,  
To the dust to which was his mother,  
Finally had had enough.

His twisted heart,  
Longed to sleep,  
To submit to the oppressing darkness.  
He wished to be at peace.

His limbs numb,  
From hours of pain,  
Carry him to the place of quiet.  
No one to witness the silence.

His disappointment is great,  
His failure is even greater.  
He strings the line,  
Pushes the button.

The black mist,  
A welcome sight to him,  
Crowds his vision,  
He is not scared.

His memories,  
Most with no joy,  
Flash through his foggy brain.  
He's almost there.



Then he sees them.  
He realizes what he is doing.  
He fumbles frantically  
But it is too late.

With his last cursed breath,  
He tries to call out,  
But he is alone.  
No one hears his desperation.

He cries,  
But all that emerges,  
Is a crimson bubble,  
Gurgling from his lips.

As his body succumbs,  
To the slumber surrounding it,  
The smallest droplet,  
Slips from his eye.

And the tear,  
Was the only apology,  
That was in his power,  
To give to those who had lost

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## YEAR 11-12 CATEGORY

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**Year 11-12 Winner:** Esther Little [Home Educated]

**Title:** *Je Suis Triste*

Jester, extraordinaire!  
Everybody fooled.

Smiling like I'm full of life,  
Underneath I've died.  
I have never been complete,  
Silence digs a hole.

Thoughts of awful things  
Roll around my mind.  
Increasing terror,  
Sorrow and pain.  
Through hidden tears, I say:  
"Everything is fine".

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**Year 11-12 Runner-Up:** Sean Lee [Albury High School]**Title:** *The Gurglegash*

The forest of primaeval beasts was quiet as the night,  
No looper's wail, or crowper's call to stealth the swooper's flight.  
The greeper's glow shone soft below on nothingness to see,  
Outcry then came, all hush-joy ceased, the creatures turned to flee!

The screech that spooked the quiet wood approached towards the ear,  
And though it far, and oh, it faint, the sound was running near.  
To tyrant nose, closed ice-curved eyes, and fur of sable ash,  
What slept so deep? What beast? It be the grievous Gurglegash.

Friend of forest, foe of man, the beast lay calm and still,  
He loved this wood and nurtured it without conflict of will.  
Who would now think that such a beast could e'er there be another?  
But unbeknownst to all he had an evil shadow brother.

The Jabberwock with biting jaws and cunning eyes aflame!  
Alone his brother knew the steps to cool his temper tame.  
He sought each day to find the way, his fate to change so grim,  
As evil was the Jabberwock, the Gurglegash loved him.

He slept so deep, aloud, asnore, enrapturing the wood,  
A-long he dwelt, his presence felt, all creatures understood.  
Abrupt, the snore a-sudden ceased, his brother's howl was fierce!  
As eardrums crashed, the guard awoke, his heart a-sudden pierced.

The screech was shrill, it travelled far, a whiffling, burbling roar,  
Then silence settled eerily upon the forest floor.  
Thud, thud! His beating heart alarmed the air, a-pitter-pat.  
His hope fell dead, and in its stead he visioned fierce combat.

"Oh art thou slain my Jabberwock? Fly to me, brother dear,  
Oh fiendish day! Ahmeeh! Ahmay!" His eyes brimmed up with tears.  
His call was heard. The Jabberwock in spirit heard his plea,  
Recalling fateful moments, murdered by the enemy.

"The foe arose, a fight he sought, two swords he had to bear,  
A dagger, small; a sword, its tip reflecting craftsman's care.  
Descent from man, and manxome foe," the apparition said,  
"I fought him brave, but of his blade, I lost my very head!"

"Cursed be the man!" the twin then cried, "To take my brother's life!"  
"To kill him is my only plan. His death will be my strife!"  
The slithy toves were hushed to hear his shriek of great distress,  
All creatures with them fearing for a vorpal, bloody mess.

The monster took a great deep breath, the ground shook with surprise:  
The brute had leapt, his arms outstretched, to penetrate the skies.  
Such gaudish wings the creature had! By nature ascertained,  
But by his nature, left unused, and thus his wings were strained.

All mimsy were the borogoves, they took towards the light,  
 Startled, surprised at sturdid speeds, the Gurglegash's flight.  
 O'er Tumtum trees and bludgeon bush, the Gurglegash had flown,  
 The whereabouts such men might be the creature had not known.

But still he searched, and all awhile, he cursed the man's own name,  
 He snarled, he glurched, his mind enraged to think of whom he'd slain.  
 As far as east is from the west, he hunted and he scoured,  
 Then flagged, fatigued, descended as approached the evening hour.

Despair diminished the search; fortuitous he found,  
 A tent, a light, a campfire sparkering on the ground!  
 Father and son sat side by side a-warming firebed,  
 Aloft the camp, despanbling, he saw his brother's head!

At this, he struck! The Gurglegash, upon my only son,  
 He ate him whole, disgorged a belch, the vengeful deed all done.  
 But unbeknownst to such a fiend, my son still bore his swords,  
 He clenched his dagger, stabbed the beast, who cried a death-filled chord!

The snicker-snack did cut him free, my son fell to my arms,  
 The bloody mess, no beamish sight, a dreadful scene of harm.  
 His words which passed before his life, were of a just petition:  
 "Forgive the two, their hatred came from vengeance and ambition."

The Jabberwock's fierce reign has ceased, his eyes of flame are doused,  
 The Gurglegash's flight aground, no beating heart espoused.  
 The violence ends, and with it comes yearning peace and quiet,  
 Never again, a war like this, but just by fate, might it?

The forest of primaeval beasts, was quiet as the night,  
 The loopers ceased, the crowpers hushed, the swooper's stolen flight!  
 The greepers' glow extinguished at such a mournful sight,  
 Three murders done: a brother, son and Gurglegash's plight.

**Year 11-12 Runner-Up:** Bridie McKay [Catholic College Wodonga]

**Title:** *Masking Myself*

I don't understand why,  
 I don't like to be touched.  
 I don't understand why,  
 I don't like people in my personal space,  
 or to take my things.  
 How do others not cry,  
 when people are mad at them?  
 How are they fine,  
 With loud noises?  
 How are they fine,  
 With change  
 I don't understand why?

I don't understand the work,  
But I pretend I do.  
I don't like what they do,  
But I pretend I do.  
I pretend I'm interested,  
When I'm not.  
I don't know how to comfort someone,  
I don't know how to act

I watch when they smile, and follow,  
I laugh when they do,  
even though I don't get the joke.  
I try to be part of the crowd, just another face in the crowd.

But when I go into my world,  
Where I don't have to pretend,  
To be anything I'm not.  
Where I can say whatever,  
And people won't get mad.  
I can create and be anything I want,  
that I choose in my imagination,  
To be myself with no limitations.



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