

EMBARGOED UNTIL 8AM FRIDAY 25 AUGUST

National Schools Poetry Award celebrates New Zealand's poets of the future

Zora Patrick, a year 12 student of Wellington High School, has won first place in the 2017 International Institute of Modern Letters' (IIML) National Schools Poetry Award, with her poem 'Dampening'.

Zora receives a prize of \$500 and the opportunity to attend a poetry masterclass with judge Ashleigh Young and fellow poet James Brown at the IIML, home of Victoria University's prestigious creative writing programme. Zora's school library also receives a \$500 book grant. Nine other gifted young poets were shortlisted in the awards and they will also attend the masterclass.



"I'm really happy to have received this award and am looking forward to reading the other shortlisted entries. I'm also looking forward to the masterclass and meeting other people interested in poetry. My other big interest is drama, which is similar to poetry in the sense that you have to be receptive to what's around you, and that is a big part of my writing," says Zora.

Judge Ashleigh Young—poet and winner of the 2017 Ockham New Zealand non-fiction book of the year prize for her collection of essays *Can You Tolerate This?*—says it is often the poems which frame the everyday or suspend a single moment that are the most compelling.

"When I came across Zora Patrick's poem 'Dampening', in which we see a man at the seaside, oblivious to everyone else, diving under and sticking his legs up in the air, I saw someone watching a small, ordinary moment in time and holding it up. Zora's poem does that marvellous thing of telling us just enough that we can imagine the possibilities of the day. I found myself thinking of stories that might surround the poem. What else had the man been doing that day? Was his family on the beach, watching him? What was his life like? It's Zora's deft handling of surprising detail that allows for myriad possible interpretations."

Zora Patrick will read her winning poem at the *Starling* journal event—VicBooks Kelburn Campus, 10.45am, Friday 25 August—to celebrate Phantom Billstickers National Poetry Day.

The nine shortlisted poets are: Katie Gotlieb, Otago Girls' High School; Antonia Smith, Rangitoto College; Hannah Wetzel, Kaitaia College; Logan McAllister, St Andrew's College; Tessie-Rose Poutai-Tipene, Te Wharekura o Mauao; Millie Hulme, Timaru Girls' High School; Anna Doak, St Margaret's College; Emily Rais, Homeschooled; Piper Whitehead, Diocesan School for Girls.

"This award recognises the ongoing vitality of poetry among young writers. It gives young poets a boost. It will also give readers of the top poems a boost to see the imaginative daring of these talented new voices," IIML Director Professor Damien Wilkins says.

All shortlisted students receive an additional package of literary prizes provided by the New Zealand Book Council, Victoria University Press, *Sport, Landfall*, and the New Zealand Society of Authors, as well as \$100. Flights and accommodation costs are covered for students outside of Wellington to attend the masterclass at the IIML.

The 2017 National Schools Poetry Award is organised by the IIML with the support of Creative New Zealand and advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather, with promotional support from Phantom Billstickers and Wonderlab.

The winning poem, the judge's report and all the shortlisted poems will be available on the [National Schools Poetry Award website](#) from 8am on National Poetry Day, Friday 25 August.

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