



CAIRNS EISTEDDFOD

cairnseisteddfod.org

SET POETRY 2024
SPEECH & DRAMA



VALE ALLANA NOYES

Cairns Eisteddfod extends heartfelt gratitude and recognition to Allana Noyes for her dedicated efforts in compiling these poems for our event. While originally engaged to serve as the adjudicator for the 2024 Speech & Drama sections of the Cairns Eisteddfod, we deeply regret to share the sad news of her passing. We honour her memory and appreciate the contributions she has made to past Cairns Eisteddfods and the broader Eisteddfod communities across Queensland and Australia.

S1 CHORIC SPEAKING – GRADES 4 TO 6

THE ANT EXPORER

Once a little sugar ant made up his mind to roam —
To fare away far away, far away from home.
He had eaten all his breakfast, and he had his Ma's consent
To see what he should chance to see and here's the way he went —
Up and down a fern frond, round and round a stone,
Down a gloomy gully where he loat ed to be alone,
Up a mighty mountain range, seven inches high,
Through the fearful forest grass that nearly hid the sky,
Out along a bracken bridge, bending in the moss,
Till he reached a dreadful desert that was feet and feet across.
*Twas a dry, deserted desert, and a trackless land to tread;
He wished that he was home again and tucked-up tight in bed.
His little legs were wobbly, his strength was nearly spent,
And so he turned around again and here's the way he went —
Back away from desert lands feet and feet across,
Back along the bracken bridge bending in the moss,
Through the fearful forest grass, shutting out the sky,
Up a mighty mountain range seven inches high,
Down a gloomy gully, where he loathed to be alone,
Up and down a fern frond and round and round a stone,
A dreary ant, a weary ant, resolved no more to roam,
He staggered up the garden path and popped back home.

- C. J. Dennis

S1 CHORIC SPEAKING – GRADES 4 TO 6

THE CROCODILE

Today I saw a crocodile,
It sat and stared at me!
I didn't run, I didn't shriek,
In case I was his tea!

No move I saw the snapper make,
His jaws remained tight shut.
Whilst sweat poured down my forehead,
I heard rumbles from his gut!

I've been in worse predicaments,
But only in my head.
Like wrestling with big brown bears,
And monsters from our shed!

But feeling brave I shuffled close,
To see his scary jaws.
The crocodile was not impressed,
And flexed his giant claws!

The beast prepared to eat me up,
He snapped, he snarled, he blew!
But I just stood and tapped the glass,
'Cause this croc is in the zoo!

- Gareth Lancaster

S2 CHORIC SPEAKING – GRADES 1 TO 3

I TAUGHT MY CAT TO CLEAN MY ROOM

I taught my cat to clean my room,
to use a bucket, brush and broom,
to dust my clock and picture frames,
and pick up all my toys and games.

He puts my pants and shirts away,
and makes my bed, and I would say
it seems to me it's only fair
he puts away my underwear.

In fact, I think he's got it made.
I'm not as happy with our trade.
He may pick up my shoes and socks,
but I clean out his litter box.

- Ken Nesbitt

S2 CHORIC SPEAKING – GRADES 1 TO 3

OUR MAGIC TOILET

We have a magic toilet.
It makes things disappear.
Just toss them in and flip the switch
and — presto! — they're not here.

We love our magic toilet.
It's super fun to use.
My brother flushed his baseball bat.
My sister flushed her shoes.

The baby flushed her bottle.
I flushed my radio.
It's crazy how things vanish
but we don't know where they go.

Our mother flushed the sofa.
She flushed our camping tent.
That's when I looked around and said,
"I wonder where dad went?"

- Ken Nesbitt

S3 SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP SET POEM – 14 TO 18 YEARS (INCLUSIVE)

MULGA BILL'S BICYCLE

*Twas Mulga Bill, from Eaglehawk, that caught the cycling craze;
He turned away the good old horse that served him many days;
He dressed himself in cycling clothes, resplendent to be seen;
He hurried off to town and bought a shining new machine;
And as he wheeled it through the door, with air of lordly pride,
The grinning shop assistant said, "Excuse me, can you ride?"

"See here, young man," said Mulga Bill, "from Walgett to the sea,
From Conroy's Gap to Castlereagh, there's none can ride like me.
I'm good all round at everything, as everybody knows,
Although I'm not the one to talk — I hate a man that blows."

"But riding is my special gift, my chiefest, sole delight;
Just ask a wild duck can it swim, a wild cat can it fight.
There's nothing clothed in hair or hide, or built of flesh or steel,
There's nothing walks or jumps, or runs, on axle, hoof or wheel,
But what I'll sit, while hide will hold and girths and straps are tight;
I'll ride this here two-wheeled concern right straight away at sight."

"Twas Mulga Bill, from Eaglehawk, that sought his own abode,
That perched above the Dead Man's Creek, beside the mountain road.
He turned the cycle down the hill and mounted for the fray,
But ere he'd gone a dozen yards it bolted clean away.
It left the track, and through the trees, just like a silver streak,
It whistled down the awful slope towards the Dead Man's Creek.

Cont...p/2

S3 SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP SET POEM – 14 TO 18 YEARS (INCLUSIVE)

MULGA BILL'S BICYCLE

Cont...p/2

It shaved a stump by half an inch, it dodged a big white-box;
The very wallaroos in fright went scrambling up the rocks,
The wombats hiding in their caves dug deeper underground,
But Mulga Bill, as white as chalk, sat tight to every bound.
It struck a stone and gave a spring that cleared a fallen tree,
It raced beside a precipice as close as close could be;
And then, as Mulga Bill let out one last despairing shriek,
It made a leap of twenty feet into the Dead Man's Creek.

- Banjo Paterson

S4 JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP SET POEM – 10 AND UNDER 14 YEARS

OVERHEARD ON A SALTMARSH (1917)

Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?

Green glass, goblin. Why do you stare at them?

Give them me.

No.

Give them me. Give them me.

No.

Then I will howl all night in the reeds,

Lie in the mud and howl for them.

Goblin, why do you love them so?

They are better than stars or water,

Better than voices of winds that sing,

Better than any man's fair daughter,

Your green glass beads on a silver ring.

Hush I stole them out of the moon.

Give me your beads. I desire them.

No.

I will howl in a deep lagoon

For your green glass beads, I love them so.

Give them me. Give them.

No.

- Harold Monro

S5 AGE GROUP SET POEM – 14 TO 18 YEARS

HOLMLEIGH

My grandmother's Brisbane house had a copper plaque that
read "Holmleigh",
and round the back, attached, an outhouse
by a red brick wall (a narrow crack at finger-running height), trellis, western
sun, broad ferns with spores like pistol caps.
Lizards liked it there and grew quite tame;
my grandma talked to one.

Figs grew down the slope (more lizards)
past the line that leaned on wooden props.
The trees had stinking bugs that looked like shields,
each with an orange cross.

They'd edge away as I climbed up for fruit and grandma said
"Watch out, they're called Spit in Your Eye?"
Sometimes those bugs would join
and walk linked at the back.

Afternoons
the dead hour,
spare room;
I brushed my grandma's hair like silkworm thread,
just at the sides so she could read her book.
Then with a sigh she'd snap her spectacles up
in a case of dry green moss, and lumber out
to the scent that grandpa left behind
of the evening Telegraph and slippers made from felt,
grumbling, "Nature Calls and We Must Obey".

- Rhyll McMaster

S5 AGE GROUP SET POEM – 14 TO 18 YEARS

DEATH OF A WHALE

When the mouse died, there was a sort of pity:
the tiny, delicate creature made for grief.
Yesterday, instead, the dead whale on the reef
drew an excited multitude to the jetty.

How must a whale die to wring a tear?
Lugubrious death of a whale: the big
feast for the gulls and sharks; the tug
of the tide simulating life still there,
until the air, polluted, swings this way
like a door ajar from a slaughterhouse.

Pooh! pooh! spare us, give us the death of a mouse
by its tiny hole; not this in our lovely bay.
— Sorry, we are, too, when a child dies;
but at the immolation of a race, who cries?

- John Blight

S6 AGE GROUP SET POEM – 12 AND UNDER 14 YEARS

THONGS ARE LIKE FOOTPRINTS

Thongs are leftover footsoles.
They are a part of their owners,
More human and personal
Than shirts or underpants.

Though put aside for the moment
They give notice of feet returning,
A continuing presence.

Thongs have character –
Toemarks in gentle indentations
More certain than fingerprints,
And the pressure of heels.

Thongs serve endlessly
In the bathroom and kitchen,
Backyard, laundry, and the newspaper shop
On Sunday morning.

Thongs leap about on beaches
Or lie discarded in the sand,
Dog-bitten and strap-ruptured
Among the happy people.

Thongs know the feel of the ground;
They are like people's footprints left lying around.

- Colin Thiele

S6 AGE GROUP SET POEM – 12 AND UNDER 14 YEARS

TIDE TALK

The tide and I had stopped to chat
About the waves where seabirds sat,
About the yachts with bobbing sails
And quite enormous, spouting whales.

The tide has lots to talk about.
Sometimes it's in. Sometimes it's out.
For something you must understand,
It's up and down across the sand;
Sometimes it's low and sometimes high,
It's very wet and never dry.

The tide, quite crossly, said: "The sea
Is always out there pushing me.
And just when I am feeling slack,
It sends me in then drags me back.
It never seems to let me go.
I rise. I fall. I'm to and fro."

I told the tide, "I know it's true
For I am pushed around like you.
And really do they think it's fair?
Do this. Do that. Come here. Go there."

Then loudly came my parents' shout.
So I went in.

The tide went out.

- Max Fatchen

S7 AGE GROUP SET POEM – 10 AND UNDER 12 YEARS

VAPOUR TRAIL

It was flying
at some tremendous height—

slow, dawdling almost
across the empty sky

so minute,
remote,

I could hear nothing, s
ee no silver glint

no tiny pin-point
burrowing cause of it —

only a vapour trail,
a thin, straight

thread of
white

dust
behind a vehicle on

the sky road
overhead.

- William Hart-Smith

S7 AGE GROUP SET POEM – 10 AND UNDER 12 YEARS

MANCO THE PERUVIAN CHIEF

i looked down at my stomach
the way one does
in the bath
and noticed
that i was scarlet
from head to toe
good gracious
i gasped
now i am a redskin
i am hiawatha
pocahontas
sitting bull
and manco the peruvian chief
i live in a forest of tall spruce
and sleep at night
in a wigwam full of strange odours.
and wood smoke
hist
i hear pale faces in the lounge
powwowing with my squaw
curse the whites
uttering fierce battle cries
i charged downstairs
and whooped into the meeting house
indian brave no likum pale face

Cont...p2

S7 AGE GROUP SET POEM – 10 AND UNDER 12 YEARS

MANCO THE PERUVIAN CHIEF

Cont...p2

i shouted defiantly
ho
ho
ho
mother hastily threw a rug around me
and said excuse me ladies
i think julian has measles
for two weeks i never left my bed
and was waited on
hand
and foot

- Redmond Phillips

S8 AGE GROUP SET POEM 8 AND UNDER 10 YEARS

LOST IN THE MIST

I'm lost in the mist
I'm lost in the mist
I'm lost in the ...
[Ouch!] I just found a tree!

I'm lost in the mist
I'm lost in the mist
I'm lost in the ...
[Splash!] I think I found a lake.

I'm lost and wet in the mist
lost and wet in the mist
lost and wet in the ...
[Yuk!] What was that squishy thing I stepped in?

I'm lost in the smelly mist
I'm lost in the smelly mist
I'm lost in the ...
[Help!] I just heard a scream!

I'm running in the mist
I'm running in the mist
I'm running in the ...
[Smack!] I found the stupid tree again!

I'm knocked out in the mist
And it's worse than being kissed!

- Steven Herrick

S8 AGE GROUP SET POEM 8 AND UNDER 10 YEARS

CAMPING

For years I've wanted to go camping —
a camping holiday with a tent
a sleeping bag
a fishing rod (for catching dinner).

I've wanted to build a fire
tell stories late into the night
go to sleep with one eye on the stars
to hear the wind whistling in the trees
and listen for ...

What's that?
that creep, and crack of dead branches
as closer it comes
it's shadow bigger than a giant on the tent wall
it's huge feet stomping outside
it's belly rumbling with hunger
and the ROAR
it's claws ripping tent walls
my screams, broken, in vain,
eaten alive, the pain, the pain.

For years I've wanted to go camping —
a camping holiday
but you know, nothing too hard.
So here we are, me and dad our tent set up
in the backyard!

- Steven Herrick

S9 AGE GROUP SET POEM 6 TO 8 YEARS

IT'S DARK IN HERE

I am writing these poems
From inside a lion,
And it's rather dark in here.
So please excuse the handwriting
Which may not be too clear.
But this afternoon by the lion's cage
I'm afraid I got too near.
And I'm writing these lines
From inside a lion,
And it's rather dark in here.

- Shel Silverstein

S9 AGE GROUP SET POEM 6 TO 8 YEARS

MOTORMOUTH

I love cars
big small
V8s classics

one day
I'll be a mechanic
on a race team

I already know
how to service
Mum's car

she says I'm her
resident expert

I have 27 model cars
my favourite is
the 1966 Ford Mustang
one day I'll own
a real one.

- Sherryl Clark

PUBLIC SPEAKING

S34: PUBLIC SPEAKING - 14-18 YEARS (inclusive)

Topic 1: The longest journey begins with a single step

Topic 2: Challenging the boundaries

S35: PUBLIC SPEAKING - 10 AND UNDER 14 YEARS

Topic 1: Words have power

Topic 2: Strange World Records (Based on facts)

S36: PUBLIC SPEAKING - 8 AND UNDER 10 YEARS

Topic 1: Why best friends are special

Topic 2: If I could talk to animals