



2018 DOROTHY HEWETT AWARD FOR AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT

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The third Dorothy Hewett Award attracted 99 entries of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. The judging panel of Terri-ann White, Director of UWA Publishing, critic James Ley, and poet Lucy Dougan selected a shortlist of five manuscripts. The winner was announced at the 2018 Perth Writers Week in a rousing and emotionally charged ceremony. It is rare to see poetry manuscripts and books rise against fiction and non-fiction to prevail and thus it was a moment of great triumph for the poet as well as her form.

Winning entry

'Legacy' by Julie Watts holds a delicate strength both in form and subject. These are poems that reflect, with grace, honesty and a sometimes unnerving directness, on the complex interconnections of contemporary life. As the poet writes about her manuscript: 'This volume explores the templates and legacies of our internal and external worlds, the psychological inheritance we share and pass on, the interplay between the prime influence of nature and nurture and the crucial, inherent drive for connection.'

'Legacy' was selected as the winner of this award because of the power and coherence of its poetry. Julie Watts is a poet with a maturity of voice, craft, and with the deep experience of being human in observations and with empathy. This volume contains joy, pride and pain. It also carries a sense of the incomprehensibility of the way that lives end, not to mention how they are lived, day on day.

Sitting alongside the grief and loss contained in a death is this enchanting moment from a poem entitled 'Afternoons in and out of Paradise':

the loose-throated peals
of children playing, float across
fences, and into everyone's afternoon.

In darker times, such as those we are living through today, when uncertainty is rife and the vulnerability of the human body and mind are exposed, poetry becomes important again. It's a continuation of an ancient practice. It is the sharpness of language, the means of going straight to the heart of the matter—declaring with gusto LISTEN—that makes poetry such a brilliant companion, during brightly lit days and under starburst but still-dark night skies.

We congratulate Julie Watts on her fine achievement.

Terri-ann White
Lucy Dougan
James Ley
February 2018