

## JUDGE'S REPORT

Poetic License 2025.

The challenge of writing traditional verse lies in its need to follow a given structure, governed by the three R's – rhyme, rhythm, and in certain styles, repetition. It also requires choosing the right style to fit the poet's chosen subject – an ode, sonnet, pantoum, villanelle, haiku, even a simple four-line verse with an ABAB, CDCD rhyming pattern, are all different in their intent.

The challenge for the judge is to read each carefully, listening for potholes (missing syllables) or speed bumps (extra syllables) in the rhythm or dodgy rhymes that don't quite work. Does the title, the banner for the work, fit the style chosen? Are the word pictures too elaborate?

But most important of all is the question, does it have the musicality that all poetry should have? Poetry is meant to be read aloud, it should have a flow to it that makes it a joy to both read and be heard.

The pleasure for me in judging this competition was to find three such poems that ticked all these boxes. There were others worthy of mention but small details needed the attention of a minor rewrite.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Prize – FEATHERED ARSONIST

A pleasure to read aloud, we are flying high with eagle, intent on his purpose and oblivious to the damage and destruction he leaves in his wake. Bravo.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – DOROTHEA

A modern-day response to her classic poem, given the devastations caused by climate change. A simple ABAB rhyming pattern which fits the sadness expressed so well in the final verse. Well done.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – ALL YOUR BITS

Another simple rhyming pattern but with a different tone, gentle melancholy and touching in its intimacy. Well done.

If your entry was not successful, please remember this is simply the opinion of one judge and poetry evokes a personal response in us all. Have someone you trust read your poem aloud to you, pick up any changes that need to be made. Then submit it elsewhere for a more favorable result.

Respectfully, Jan Foster.