

BALLEA WRITERS NEWS

Publication and One Thousand Euro Worth of Prizes To be awarded in Ballea Writers Young Poets of the Year Competition

Submit by March 16th 2007

This competition will culminate in an awards ceremony during the Carrigaline Arts Network Day of March 31st. The Country Arts Office, eager to promote unity among the Arts of this area, have asked each and every Arts group to come up with something that will bring their Art to the young. The Young Poets Competition is the Ballea Writers' contribution.

We all know that the future of the Arts lies with the young but, don't laugh, the Arts Office request was not backed up with a crumb of funding for us or any of the other Arts Groups involved. Yet again the streets of Carrigaline are a litter with begging bowls for emaciated Arts. If we were a West Cork town we would get funds for virtually everything, even down to the toilet paper.

Ballea Writers, having won 2nd in the 32 counties 'Writing Group of the Year Award' went silver cup in hand for sponsorship and are eternally grateful to Maryville, the new Equestrian Centre of Carrigaline and Martin Walsh, the new Pharmacy in the Supervalu Mall for, between them, putting up the prizes.

Poetry entries are flowing in, for what has become a very exciting competition. When you are drooling over your little darlings publications and proudly giving books of their poetry to relatives next Christmas don't thank Ballea Writers, thank our sponsors. We are writers, not business people and couldn't do this alone. Prize monies taken care of we still need help with the money to get the childrens poetry book published. All pledges most gratefully received.

Many of you e-mailed us to ask what type of poetry we are looking for. Firstly we are looking for originality. A winning poem could be in the form of a sonnet or any other rhyming form, in free verse, blank verse or any other type of verse. It is immaterial what vehicle is presented as long as it is roadworthy, drives smoothly, and takes us on an inspiring and unforgettable journey.

When you come across a really good poem you know it straight away. It grabs hold of you and won't let go. It demands to be read a dozen times over. A strong poem follows you around and catches up with you at checkouts, in traffic jams and even in the bath. It is a living breathing life form.

The Pattison Chisholm 2001 'Writing Competitions' The Way to Win have a chapter on how to win poetry competitions. They say that a special poem is one that communicates its message to the reader with panache. And what is panache I ask myself. It is confidence, flair, style, flamboyance and elegance; or so my thesaurus tells me. And what about passion? Wherever else we may try to fake passion and think that we can get away with it; we have no chance of getting away with faking passion in a poem. If it doesn't send a tingle down the spine of the writer it can't possibly do it for the reader. Its passion that makes children such wonderful poets, they love something or hate it and haven't yet discovered the niceties of apathy. In adult poetry, as Pattison points out, there are topics that are better avoided when originality is

sought. By adulthood we have read so many poems on bereavement, depression, cruelty and war that it is hard for us to look at any of these topics afresh, but that is not so for a child. Take for example, the following poem that I wrote in the aftermath of Bloody Friday, when a dismembered leg dropped out of the sky and landed at my feet. An adult poet would have dwelt on the leg and laboured its gory image onto the page. The child in me saw it differently.

Let Harmony Be Found

Whether the scale be major or minor

The sharps and flats fit neatly together:

They play in harmony.

Let the sharps and flats be Protestant and Catholic

Why is the piano out of tune?

Harmony lost forever.

A piano must be regularly tuned

Not left to rot: a country doomed

Let us work together for peace.

Let the joyous singing, dancing and bands,

That once we heard throughout these lands,

Replace the fear, the thundering boom of the bomb.

Let our river of conscience run clear again,

Not blood stained with hate and strife:

Why is it not so?

Oh Lord come, please come,

End the bitterness and forever

Unite us as one

In the eyes of Our Father

is that reality that embodies children's writing with a passion and conviction that adults cannot reach.

Over the next few weeks Ballea Writers, who won top poem in the 32 counties, will be reading hundreds of poems in each of the three age categories and have been asked to give some insight into how the judging works. Every poem will be given an identity tag in the form of a code number, say 1-1000 for Junior, 1001-2000 for Intermediate and 2001-3000 for Senior, whereby the judges will be kept from knowing the names of the entrants. The three categories will always be kept separate from each other and designated its own panel of readers.

As the entries come through they will be divided into three piles: weak, moderate and strong. The weak will be eliminated in round one, then all the moderate will be read again and some promoted to strong for the continuation to round three. Then the strong pile, which will still be well in excess, will be split and re-split until only twenty poems remain.

Then every member of the panel will read all twenty poems in one sitting and give each a mark out of ten, recorded on separate sheets. The poems will be shuffled and reshuffled and the process repeated twice more. Points will then be collated. Lastly before the winners are

win more than once. It is hoped that each of the schools, of Carrigaline and District, including Monkstown, Ballygarvan, Ballinhassig, Minane Bridge and Crosshaven, get at least one winner. It is hoped that the Irish language is also represented.

The competition is divided into three categories; Junior i.e. 4th to 6th class, Intermediate, i.e. 1st to 3rd year and Senior i.e. 4th to 6th year. Each category will have awards for, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, three Highly Commended and 14 runners up. There will thus be 20 winners per age range and sixty winners overall.

PRIZES

Sponsored by Maryville Equestrian Centre and Martin Walsh Pharmacy. All sixty winners will be photographed for the Carrighoun, get a certificate and a rosette and have their poetry published in a book. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd place entrants and the Highly Commended will get additional publications and public recitals of their poetry at the awards ceremony on March 31st and again at the launch of the book. The cash prizes are €75 for firsts, €50 for seconds, €25 for thirds and €10 for Highly Commended. The 1st prize winners also get a €25 lesson in show jumping at Maryville, the new Equestrian Centre of Carrigaline. The book of sixty poems will be named by the title of the winning poem i.e. the submission from the overall winner: 'Ballea Writers Young Poet of the Year' and a selection of the poems in the book will be illustrated by a professional.

RULES

Spelling will not be taken into consideration

Entries must be typed, or neatly handwritten, on white single-sided A4 papers and contain nothing other than the Poem, its Title and page number.

The author's date of birth, name, address, telephone, email, school, class, contact teacher and a cross-reference to the Title should appear on a cover page only.

Poems may be up to maximum of forty lines in length

Poems may be on any theme or subject. The entry fee is a €2 coin per poem. Individuals may enter as many poems as the wish, but each poem and its entry fee must be submitted in a separate envelope, marked 'Ballea Writers Young Poets of the Year' Competition.

Entry is accepted on the understanding that, while copyright remains with the authors, Ballea Writers are granted the publication rights to the poems for a one-year period i.e. until March 31st 2008.

Be sure to make your own copies because submissions cannot be returned.

The decisions of the judges are final. Poems must reach the collection points, The Carrighoun Newspaper, Carrigaline Library, Maryville Equestrian Centre, Martin Walsh Pharmacy, The Carrigaline Court Hotel or a participating School by March 16th 2007.

CONTACT

Ballea Writers, who meet in the Ballea Suite of the Carrigaline Court Hotel from 7.30 -9.30 on the second and forth Mondays of every month, can be



The late, champion showjumper Bawnea Cooltan, ridden by Naomi Rhys-Davies in Millstreet Newcomers, their first event together. Naomi rides regularly at Maryville Carrigaline.

Elaine S. Elliott aged 14

As a psychology undergraduate I studied death and dying. The paintings of leukaemia children demonstrate that young children see life as a circle. As children grow older their paintings represent an eclipse and by adulthood they draw it as a straight line. The pony in the photograph died a few months ago but if a child were to write a poem about him we would hear of his cloud jumping, what is fantasy to an adult is reality to a child. It

notified, their poems will be scanned, through a computer, to check for possible plagiarism.

The absolute winner 'Ballea Writers Young Poet of the Year' could be a junior, intermediate or senior. It will be the person who's standard of poetry is furthest ahead of their field. The book of winning poems will be titled by their poem.

With twenty winning poems in each category there will be sixty overall but as multiple entries are permitted a poet can