

# Winner 2019

## *Lost and Found*

by Rebecca Sargeant

A wedding dress in a pickle jar.  
A baby's cry in a crowded bar.  
A birthday cake in a biscuit tin.  
A little boy's shoes on a tidal whim.  
Did you learn to swim  
    on the outstretched hands  
    of a motherland?

A toothbrush on a sailing ship.  
A photo in a rubbish tip.  
A lipstick shade in a harsher light.  
A word that slipped during the night.  
Does thunder crack  
    your bones into  
    a jigsaw map?

Pallet strapping in a bird's nest.  
A broken heart in a treasure chest.  
A deserted dessert in a desert.  
A desert girl by sea.  
Does the sun rise  
    in the east or west?  
    Do you need some rest?

Rest and lay your weary head  
    on the pillow of words you thought were dead.  
Rest and wipe your teary eyes  
    on the fabric of our human lives.  
Rest and plant your broken dreams  
    in soils fertile of communal means.  
Rest and spread your sacred wings  
    and fear not for what tomorrow brings.



runner up 2019

## **Flensed**

by Greg Molyneux

A figure flickers between the urban streetlights  
darting from one pool of shadow to the next.  
Hair blacker than dried ink trails languidly  
rejecting the silence; the audio shrapnel.  
This is the long quiet between explosions  
the time of stray bullets, the overdue attack, the ambush.  
A measured breath quietens the quickening pulse  
the murmur of suburban noise grounds her.  
She remembers; I made it out alive,  
even if life and living are different  
and memories cut like knives.  
The war zone is long past gone  
but not the depth of her sorrow  
like the lowest point of the ocean swell  
sinking the boat which floated her  
or the bearded sailor who saved her  
and brought her to the Lucky Country.  
She made it, but not her husband;  
the teacher, volunteer, medic.  
She made it, but not her son;  
the boy who waved to soldiers.  
She made it, but not her daughter;  
the girl who bandaged her toys.  
But she made it  
in the Lucky Country.

..ooOoo..

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## **Pirouette**

by Briget Thomas

She hears her grandfather in the patio  
tuning the strings of the *oud* with delicate focus,  
then, outstretching his fingers to form chords  
across the wooden neckboard, their shapes  
resembling patterns  
in the dot-to-dot colouring-in books  
she spends her afternoons on,  
connecting lines toward the direction of each number:  
felt-tip pen in hand, the gradual reveal  
of a puzzle on its way to completion

For her grandfather, the *oud*  
is an atlas.  
Not just an instrument,  
but a map to the resolution of chord progressions,  
harmonic destinations  
form his tonal homes.  
Out in the garden, his granddaughter spins  
in time with the music,  
the dead eucalyptus leaves falling  
in the dry heat of the air.

In a crowded bazaar  
On the other side of the world,  
a tan-lined tourist shakes a snowglobe  
purchased from a souvenir stall.  
The glittery snow behind the glass  
falls like dried eucalyptus leaves  
pirouetting down from the thirsty trees

..ooOoo..



*runner up 2019*

**Hope**  
**by Michele Poole**

The night falls without a sound, fearful am I,  
evil haunts my mind like an ungodly force.  
Planes, missiles, soldiers,  
rubble, screams, rockets firing.  
These are my dreams, erupting in the night.  
Tragic ending of my generation destroyed,  
swept away by madness, all hope is disappearing,  
like a never-ending black hole.

Around, the dark memories gather,  
mourning of my husband. My dread grows as the  
angry hand of Heaven falls against my heart.  
It mutilates me, and darkly my life's blood drips  
to the wicked earth that is my prison.  
In my madness, I cry out, while Hell laughs cruelly.  
I hear the screaming of kids, buried  
underneath the rubble.

I see an electrolier, silently still, not moving.  
My phone is my connection, to the living and the lost.  
Freedom is an imagination, a place to hope,  
something to dream and explore.  
I am seeking Asylum.  
A place where my children can laugh, play and discover.  
A haven that they are not afraid of death.

I dream when the torture in my mind, escapes  
like an animal released from its cage.  
My child asks, "can I take any toys?"  
My son says, "we can learn English."  
I mourn within, leaving my mother.  
"I'm too sick to travel," she says.  
The night falls in a heavy, suffocating  
cloak, soulless are we.

The salvation for which I pine.  
"It's time to go," I say to my relatives.  
My passion for life throbs no more. How could  
you tear us asunder?  
I watch the crumbling buildings, the bombed  
shopping centre, the playground with the  
eerie spirits of time passed.  
The decision to leave this forsaken place.

Memory of my husband having breakfast,  
Then, with a click of a finger, disappears,  
with a black hood on his head,  
his helpless arms tied around his neck.  
I still hear the screaming of my children.  
He promises them a pony.  
I feel the angels surround us, crying,  
saving us from ourselves.

Hope is far yet, within reach.  
I am seeking Asylum.

..ooOoo..

