

Judges' comments on the Secondary School prize winning entries

First Place: "Birdsong"

We were both impressed by the effective simplicity of this piece, capturing as it does a quiet moment in the speaker's life. The narrative voice is strong, and the piece is visually powerful. The writer includes excellent detail of the natural world, enabling the reader to share in the moment, and there is mature manipulation of language. A clear winner.

Second Place: "A Beautiful Silence"

The character and situation are clearly established in the powerful opening of this piece, which includes effective use of the senses to add convincing detail. We appreciated the interesting use of foreshadowing, resulting in the speaker's realisation that what he was looking for was, perhaps, there all along - a useful lesson.

Third Place : " I Found Myself Standing Yet Again..."

The writer's accomplished use of language clearly conveys the speaker's disenchantment and emotional conflict and the piece is impressive in its creation of mood.

Commended:

a) " Entirely Alone"

The writer employs interesting imagery to create a powerful mood.

Please encourage this entrant to continue developing their poetic technique, as this is a very promising piece of work.

b) " The Hermit"

An interesting idea. The writer explores a common disillusionment, using effective detail.

This story shows clear potential, and we would encourage the writer to work on developing the consistency of the narrative.