

John Foulcher is the 2019 ACU poetry prize-winner

Canberra-based poet John Foulcher is the winner of the 2019 ACU Prize for Poetry, receiving \$10,000 in prize money for his entry *Revising Casuarinas*.

Mr Foulcher's poem was selected ahead of *Single Women In Their Later* by Geoff Page also from Canberra (\$5,000 second prize) and *October Morning After Rain* by Mark Tredinnick from Bowral (\$3,000 third prize).

Mark Tredinnick won the first prize in 2016 and Geoff Page won in 2017.

A record number of entries were received for this year's competition with almost 600 poems submitted from every state and territory across Australia. The winner was chosen from a shortlist of 53.

The judging for the competition is completed in a blind format to ensure impartiality.

The ACU Prize for Poetry was judged by Australian poet and distinguished academic and critic Professor Chris Wallace-Crabbe, one of the best-known figures in Australia's literary community who enjoys a wider reputation in the international world of letters.

Professor Wallace-Crabbe singled out Mr Foulcher's poem for its richly coloured response to this year's theme, Solace.

"As may be imagined the theme of solace reached inside our poets and far beyond or above them, at the same time," he said. "Poetic inspiration can arrive from deep within a writer yet, at the same time, from some truly imagined site beyond the particular self.

"True poems are both dense and light, musical and natural, rich and simple. Theirs is an art of concentrating paradox... and telling final truths. All the shortlisted poems this year underwrote such artistic need for balance, colour and – above all – truth. You might say that, in the end they were like strong horses at Flemington, one of which beats several others by a short half head."

The Office of the Vice President, led by Father Anthony Casamento csma, sponsors the ACU Prize for Poetry with the goal of continuing the tradition of the Catholic Church as a key patron of the arts.

"Australian Catholic University is delighted to continue its support of Australian artists, writers and poets. The record number of entries received this year coupled with the calibre of writing demonstrates that the arts, and in specific the process of artistic creation, continues to thrive in Australia," Father Anthony said.

The poems will be published in the 2019 ACU Prize for Poetry chapbook which is available for purchase by emailing aculiteratureprize@acu.edu.au

ACU Prize for Poetry winners list

1st prize *Revising Casuarinas* by John Foulcher from Canberra, ACT

2nd *Single Women In Their Later* by Geoff Page from Canberra, ACT

3rd *October Morning After Rain* by Mark Tredinnick from Bowral, NSW

Highly commended: *Last Night on Mount Zion* by Anne Benjamin from Toongabbie, NSW

Highly Commended: *The Blackwood River's Song* by Rose van Son from Burswood, WA

Highly Commended: *The Whale* by Frank Corso from Sydenham, VIC

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