

Mary Gilmore Award Report 2014

Judges: Dr Lucy Dougan (UWA), Professor Philip Mead (UWA), Dr Marcella Polain (Edith Cowan University)

The 2014 Mary Gilmore Award for a best first book of Australian poetry published in the two preceding years attracted 47 entries from 21 publishers. Overall, the judges were impressed by the range of work and its quality, and also the vigor of Australian publishers of poetry at this moment. Regrettably, a handful of very fine entries were deemed ineligible for the award because their authors had previously published chapbooks.

Shortlist:

After much deliberation, the judges agreed on a shortlist of the following four titles:

Lachlan Brown, *Limited Cities*, Giramondo (Highly Commended)

Julie Chevalier, *Linen Tough as History*, Puncher & Wattman (Highly Commended)

Daniela Kambaskovic, *Internal Monologues (a romance)*, Fremantle Press

Rose Lucas, *Even In The Dark*, UWA Publishing (Winner)

Lachlan Brown, *Limited Cities*, Giramondo:

Brown's elegant lines hum with a restless energy that is perfectly attuned to the out-of-the-way places and moments his poems find. His lexicon is inventively heady, allowing for many surprising and delightful conjunctions.

Julie Chevalier, *Linen Tough as History*, Puncher & Wattman:

Chevalier's work traverses expansive fields of reference and representations of contemporary experience with both verve and candour. Her very sure ear is evident throughout this cast of dramatic personae; and her wit and absurdist leanings are always cut through with a dark grace.

Daniela Kambaskovic, *Internal Monologues (a romance)*, Fremantle Press:

This collection of sustained dramatic monologues, using the imagined voices of characters from myth and fiction, employs language and meter with great care. The result is deeply engaging poetry, tough and tender in turn.

Rose Lucas, *Even In The Dark*, UWA Publishing: Winner

Lucas's collection shines with a clear intelligence and keen observation of the everyday, landscape, place, art, love and grief. The poems, evocative and moving, also sit so lightly on the page. Formal strengths of the work include a sureness of lineation, open endings, and an overall control of tone in material that is emotive but never sentimental. Lucas's poems arrive at and capture the allusiveness of being seemingly without any tricks.

The judges would like to wish all entrants and their publishers the very best for future endeavours, and send warmest congratulations to the short-listed poets, particularly Rose Lucas for such a satisfying and beautifully made first book of poems.