

The A. D. Hope Prize 2016

Judges Citation for Winning Essay by Shaun Bell, University of New South Wales

Bringing fresh attention to the writings of Sumner Locke Elliott, to his literary reputation and achievement, Shaun Bell's essay – "'but even memory is fiction': The (fictional) Life and (self) Writing of Sumner Locke Elliott" – presents an innovative re-reading of the primal scene of an emergent writing self in Elliott's fiction. Working with Edelman's concept of homographesis, Bell advances the field by recognising Elliott's various recastings and reconfigurations of this signature scene, one both autobiographical and fictional, real and imagined, and that serves as the site of self- and literary-production. Bell's argues ambitiously that Elliott's fiction rightly belongs *neither* to any narrowly conceived nationalist literary paradigm *nor* to the category of the middlebrow to which it is often consigned. Rather he wants us to see that its significance arises from Elliott's homographetic negotiation of the writing self, and from his vivid illumination of a queer writer's trials and tribulations in Sydney during the interwar years.