

# INTERNATIONAL WRITERS' WORKSHOP NZ INC.

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[iww.co.nz](http://iww.co.nz)

**Press Release: 16 November 2021**

## **The Kathleen Grattan Prize for a Sequence of Poems**

### **2021 Winner Announced**

**Robyn Maree Pickens** has been announced today as the 2021 winner of the Kathleen Grattan Prize for a Sequence of Poems, in an online ceremony.

The annual competition is organised by Auckland based writing group, International Writers Workshop (also known as IWW.)

Robyn Maree Pickens has won the \$1,000 prize for her sequence of poems, entitled 'Juniper.'

Ōtepoti Dunedin poet and art writer, Robyn has been a member of IWW for two years.

On receiving her award Robyn said: "As a huge fan of Vana Manasiadis' poetry, I am incredibly honoured to win the 2021 IWW Kathleen Grattan Prize for a Sequence of Poems. I would like to thank Vana for the time and consideration evident in her comments on all finalists' work, and IWW for organising this prize."

**Vana Manasiadis** judged the competition and described Robyn Maree Pickens' winning entry as: "a supple, intimate, fragile and extremely powerful work. I went to places in each of the poems that I couldn't have guessed at from the beginning, the work stranges expectation – and this is what the sublime in poetry should do – and in this case, does".

The Kathleen Grattan Prize for a Sequence of Poems competition has been run by IWW for thirteen years and Robyn Maree Pickens joins a list of winners including Siobhan Harvey in 2019 and 2020 winner, Liz Breslin. Both Harvey and Breslin used their victories over the past two years to launch books in 2021 based on their respective winning sequences. ("Ghosts" by Siobhan Harvey and "In Bed with the Feminists" by Liz Breslin)

This year there were two runners-up, and they were announced as **Kerrin Sharpe** for her sequence titled 'Te hau o te atua/The breath of heaven, and **Marie McGuigan** for her hybrid sequence titled: "The Goose Wing."

Manasiadis described Kerrin Sharpe's sequence as "an incredible work which has continued to generate multiple layers and emotional landscapes with every read; the sculpting of its physical geography is stunning and palpable".

Manasiadis described Marie McGuigan's sequence as "an extremely rich work with breath-taking images that come together to move in all senses – into and out of form, the past, the air, language, and always deep love and leaving."

Manasiadis considered the task of choosing the winners a gift during this very unsettling time, and said, 'The winners – and all the entrants – gave something of themselves in the writing of their sequences, and this was evident in the incredible quality of the year's submissions'.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions the announcement was made via Zoom rather than at the usual in-person presentation in Auckland. IWW has been running all of its fortnightly meetings via Zoom since August so members were prepared for such circumstances. IWW has announced that its annual prizegiving has been postponed to until February 2022 when Robyn will be celebrated in person.

At the February 2022 ceremony, prizes will be given out for haikus, tankas, flash fiction, romance writing and a children's story all of which demonstrates the breadth of writing that IWW members have learnt about and competed in through the year.

IWW President, Duncan Perkinson said: "We are absolutely thrilled for Robyn. The Kathleen Grattan Prize for a Sequence of Poems is a prestigious prize on the New Zealand literary calendar and IWW is proud to organise it. 2021 has emphasised the importance of flexibility and throughout multiple COVID-19 lockdowns the group has still come together on a fortnightly basis to share our writing. We look forward to coming together in person 2022 to congratulate Robyn as well as all of our other winners from our writing competitions through 2021."



Robyn Maree Pickens, 2021 winner of the Kathleen Grattan Prize for a Sequence of Poems

### **About the Prize**

The Kathleen Grattan Prize for a Sequence of Poems has been made possible by a bequest from the Jocelyn Grattan Charitable Trust. It was a specific request of the late Jocelyn Grattan that her mother be recognised through an annual competition in recognition of her love for poetry and that the competition be for a sequence or cycle of poems with no limit on the length of the poems.

This is the thirteenth year IWW has had the honour of organising the Prize.

Previous winners are Liz Breslin (2020), Siobhan Harvey (2019) Heather Bauchop (2018), Janet Newman (2017), Michael Giacon (2016) Maris O'Rourke (2015), Julie Ryan (2014), Belinda Diepenheim (2013), James Norcliffe (2012), Jillian Sullivan (2011) Janet Charman and Rosetta Allan (joint winners 2010) and Alice Hooton (2009).

*The Kathleen Grattan Prize for a Sequence of Poems* is sometimes referred to as the 'Little Grattan' as the Jocelyn Grattan Charitable Trust also funds the biennial *Kathleen Grattan Award*, run by *Landfall* / Otago University Press.

### **About the Judge**

Born in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, Vana Manasiadis has been moving between Aotearoa New Zealand and Europe for the last 25 years. Her poetry experiments with hybridity and code-switching and has been translated into Greek and Italian, and she has edited and translated from Greek for *Shipwrecks/Shelters*, a selection of contemporary Greek poetry. In 2018 she co-edited *Tātai Whetū: Seven Māori Women Poets in Translation* with Maraea Rakuraku.

### **About IWW and Contact Details**

Formed in 1976, International Writers Workshop meets twice a month in Northcote from February through November. The group hosts workshops and holds writing competitions throughout the year covering a range of topics and themes. The group aims to encourage and inspire new writers as well as more experienced writers.

For further information about the Prize or about IWW in general, please visit the website at [www.iww.co.nz](http://www.iww.co.nz) or email [iww-writers@outlook.com](mailto:iww-writers@outlook.com).