

UPPER PRIMARY

Winner

Robin Allsopp

Chapel Hill State School
CHAPEL HILL QLD

Sodden Dreams

Memories that will haunt my dreams forever.
Never-ending droplets,
drumming down on cracked ground,
filling potholes,
swirling, murky puddles,
spilling out,
creating pools.
The rain drives on.
Quietly,
like a tiger stalking its prey,
the water creeps up.
Slowly, slowly people leave,
but I stay.
It'll stop,
I'll be okay,
won't I?

Silently it seeps,
through every crack and crevice.
Drowning memories.
Destroying everything with watery fingers.
The streets are rivers,
and houses lakes,
but I stay.
It'll go down,
I'll be okay,
won't I?

Roaring now,
in torrents,
past my house.
Sucking away everything in its path.
Pushing down,
sending dreams and possessions to a watery
grave,
but I stay.
What choice do I have?
Help will come.
I'll be okay,
won't I?

I step out.

The water grabs me with its powerful hands.
Trying to carry me,
willing me to follow it,
forcing, forward.
I struggle, it is strong,
yet I defeat it.
I want to leave,
but I stay.
What else can I do?
Not long now.
I'll be okay,
won't I?

Silence takes over.
I look outside,
finally the rain has stopped.
Ever so slowly,
The water slinks away,
leaving rot and filth behind.
Inside and outside are much the same.
I could leave this all behind,
but I stay.
It will recover.
I'll be okay,
won't I?

Dots of orange against brown.
Helpers as abundant as the debris.
Tears fall,
cleansing the ground where lives will be
rebuilt.
Community pulls together,
sharing donations and stories.
Working as one.
We make progress,
But we'll never forget.
Slowly, slowly people return,
but I stayed.

I was okay,
wasn't I ?

Judges' Comment:

This is very good piece, with evidence of the poet being close to the events. The echo of "I was okay" works beautifully with a simple twist of the question at the end. Her voice is sensitive to the action but not burdened by the pain of the events. An excellent sense of word power and flow ("the water slinks away leaving rot and filth behind..."). there is momentum in the work as the water moves: "Sucking..." , "Pushing down/ sending dreams and possessions to a watery grave". The descriptions are rich, going step by step from falling rains to rising flood, the waters receding and then to the clean-up afterwards. The writer is there all the time; she sees, hears and feels the water encroaching on her life. The poem is a vivid response to something that has happened so recently, expressed simply and spontaneously and without apology for the writer remaining in her house when she might otherwise have left.