

Junior Division, Poetry (16-20 years)

Liam Butler, Conception Bay South

**In the Woods**

Half sunk in a ditch,  
I've been made to stare blank faced  
through sodden pine boughs,  
to tread through gravel ruts  
and mud spill roads,  
tracing the backcountry trap houses  
dead ends and dugouts;  
the shore's welting acne,  
and the city's pulsing blister.

Through fog wading and cigarette smoke  
I've found no recompense  
amongst the used condoms, needles,  
and fathomless droves of garbage  
that upholster the earth  
about this Bay-  
a nauseating sterility  
rearing scarecrow men  
from its cankered, septic loins.

They shamble in and through the wood,  
skulk about the streets  
by way of Cavalier, Suzuki, GMC,  
their sole craft and artfulness,  
scouring the bush  
for blood or aphrodisiac-  
their valium heads,  
throbbing abscesses  
of their bald, rancid heritage.