

Poetry

Competition


Adults and Teens

shortlisted entries




Ngā Puna Mātauranga o
Te Awa Kairangi ki Uta
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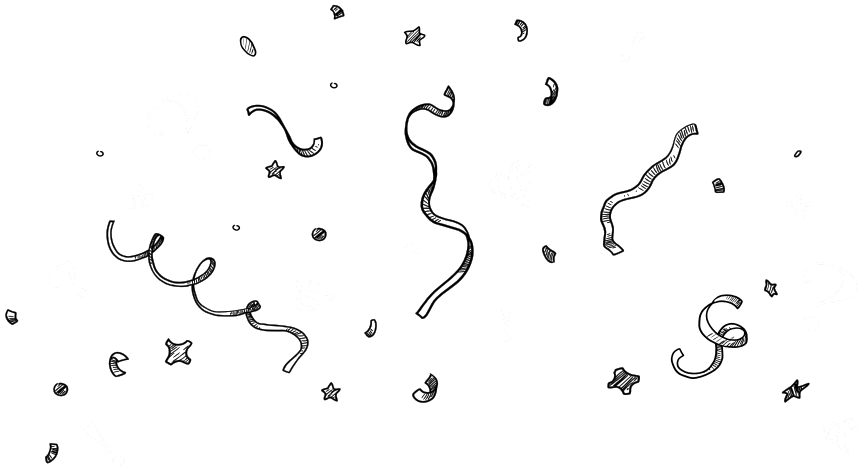
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Teens

*Winner
& Runner up*

This river is my home

by Jess Frew

The river rushes past while serenading me
I think of all the things it tells me I can be
This embodiment of love, freedom and hope
This river that leads me to my home
It twirls and dances through the day
Creating a path that lights our way
For this embodiment helped me see
That she is the one for me
The river rushes past while creating a serenading sound
For it is my love, freedom and hope
This river is my home

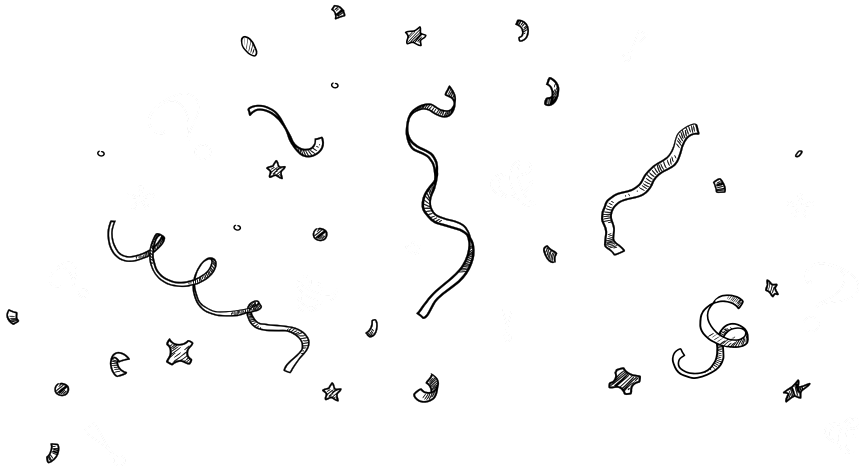


The River Poem

by Emily-Jane Butler

The morning light touched the earth
like a soft blanket wrapping the world
in its warmth, the endless cries for help
faded into the darkness and there
you stood in the river awaiting for me.





Adults

Winners & Shortlist

Walking in Winter beside the Hutt River

by Moira Hansen

She breathes and talks both at once
my river companion,
like a gossipy neighbour,
like a breathless child recounting their day.

Raindrops fall, like words, all over me
darkening my coat.
Landing, like sequins, in puddles.

Grey river water runs swiftly
over stones water-smooth.
Bruised sky presses down
on people, dogs and bicycles.
Twisted clouds low-hanging
held up by the raised arms of trees
let us pass in the space beneath.
With weighted breath drawn down,
we keep our greetings short, our voices low.
Our eyes are sideways-darting.

Fat kereru swoops, barely airborne,
an early morning drunk stumbling home;
breaking branches, landing badly.
Crash. Bang. Wallop.
Grasps finally a swaying branch,
and perches roundly there.
A big bosomed woman in a white pinafore.

Notes hang heavy from leaves
dripping music like fat raindrops,
glistening like jewels in spots of sunlight.

Alongside, a twin river of traffic
snakes its parallel way to the harbour.
The one with the city scattered round it.

And the river runs on,
here grumbling over rocks,
a whiskery old woman mumbling her litany of complaints;
there gurgling, shallow,
babbling baby-like, dimpled and smiling,
soft splashes kicking like small, fat legs.
Songs in the round.



A Longtime Local

by Kathryn Eagle



Nestled in the heart of the Hutt,
A longtime local resides.
She sees, hears, and knows everything,
It is all of our secrets that she hides.

Gaze into the colour of her waters and it'll bring up memories,
So be prepared to reminisce.
Blue and emerald hues, like the eyes of boys we once loved
Back before we learnt; love shouldn't feel like an abyss.

Dip your toes into her current and you'll feel some gentle waves,
Rocking you back and forth like the arms of a mother.
We took the feeling for granted, but many years later
These waves will remind us, of a safety unlike any other.

Stroll along her banks and appreciate the trees all around,
Let nature provide you with tranquillity.
Just like yourself, many of us have walked this path before
When we all needed some semblance of stability.

That's the superpower of this local,
She provides respite and relief.
People cast their worries into her depths and watch them flow away
But some of those worries carry painful truths and grief.

So if you decide to visit this longtime local,
Be gentle and patient with her, please.
Because no matter where people go, or what they choose to share
She harbours their burdens for them, and provides them with ease.

This longtime local reflects all of our lives,
Being around her is like looking into a mirror.
And this longtime local? She has a name
Te Awa Kairangi, or to some, the Hutt River.

Flow

by Adam Williamson

Te Awakairangi flowed
serenely and peacefully
calmly and tranquilly
she meandered
listlessly until one day
she forgot who she was
she babbled around
a bend and a new feeling
bubbled to the surface
she wanted to roar
to rant and to rage
to be torrential
and tumultuous
and tempestuous
and thunder across the rocks
she wanted to cause confusion
and chaos and catastrophe
to crash and clamour and clatter
and shriek and scream and shout
to create disorder and disharmony
to bring death instead of life
she boiled around another bend
and saw the people playing
suddenly Te Awakairangi
remembered herself
and she wept until
the feeling subsided
settling like the algae
on the rocks over
which she flowed
serenely and peacefully
calmly and tranquilly
contentedly



Torrents

by Emma Walker

Flowing over pebbles,
Rushing over stones,
Forcing movement on the riverbed,
As the river flows.

Tributaries far and wide,
Akatarawa, Mangaroa, Pakuratahi and Whakatikei.
Holding such mana, and such pride.

The tidal pull of the moon so high,
Glowing overhead,
Filling the night sky.
The glistening tones of the water blending and braiding,
Amongst the greenery of mother nature.

The people gather in the summertime,
To swim,
To gaze,
To soak in,
To be at peace with.

Such a beautiful body of water,
Caressing the landscape,
And all of its surrounds.

Nothing will stop this rippling river,
Its beauty and its sounds.

Te awa, rere

by Sophie Hauwaho

The river flows, always moving, never still; *neke*
Like emotions coming and going; *ki roto, ki waho*
The beginning is not the end; *huri*
Be gently guided along the journey; *arahina ahau*
Hear the constant rush of water; *mana*
Floating heaviness downstream; *mānu*
Always pressing onwards; *whakamua*
Be swept away, taken out to sea; *paheke*
Enjoy the view; *kia whakahauora*

Besieged

by P. N. Archbald

Past summers, children swimming, dogs paddling
Under clear crystal.
A sparkle in the river's eye,
Warm sun, bright skies,
A picture of health in every eddy.

Past summers subverted.
A castle under siege.
Water taken, morale is low.
Contamination and disease.
Catapulted over walls.
Polluted well, no longer fit to drink.
Sallow river, too hard to hide the jaundiced liver.
Algal gangrene, infected wound.

Come autumn, patient rallies.
Falling, yellow boats float towards the sea.
Winter's turgid torrents flush the poison out.
Waking to spring, the water shines and smiles again.
Wary, though, of summer's relapse.
A plea for those who lay siege:
"Lay down your arms.
Let the lifeblood course through my veins again."

Hutt Rivulets

by Marion Callus

The river is:

Kayaking heaven, a twin bridge emersion
Akatarawa commencement of a paddling excursion
Maoribank corner - such eddies and rocks
Holding your breath...until safe through the knocks

The river is:

A teen day escape - friends having fun
With bread rolls and Coke, from a Pak 'n Save run
Swimming and sunbathing, it's the best place to be
Mum doesn't worry - she trusts us you see.

The river is:

A family adventure - with picnics for meals
Cooling off in the shallows - watch out for the eels!
Three generations together - no devices, no phones
Choosing smooth pebbles - then skimming the stones

The river is:

A place of reflection from life on the run
Just sitting, reclining, absorbing the sun
The gurgling, the slurping, of rock, pebble and stone
A place full of solitude, of calm your own

The river is:

Connecting the valley through drought, floods and quakes
Giving us water from streams, rivers and lakes
An ancestral artery from ranges to shore
It's our place, our legacy - to protect evermore

Wai Ora.

by Ali Banks

The sun's heat warms my hair and skin,
As the bottom of the river bites at my feet.
The crisp, cold, liquid, forms an icy blanket around my thighs
And I plunge my body, deep, down, into the water.
Drips run down my back as I arise.
Sweeping back my hair and feeling the heat of the sun upon my face again.

A sweaty, dirty, rottweiler treads carefully at the shore.
Eventually succumbing to the call of the cool depths.
Leaping with such fervour, his fear has been forgotten.
Squeals of excited nerves resound around the valley
And a father's arms offer safety to his clamoring child.

I am changed in this place.
As though the sickness in my body is washed down the river.
I am transformed.
As I move beneath the water, I feel young and strong.
Somehow, I feel, more real
As I sit and breath in this space with others.
I feel whole with every movement, every sight, every sound.
And I am grateful
As I receive the gift of this moment from Te Awa Kairangi.

Family Portrait

by Abra Sandi King

When we took our kids to the river
it was always about the stones. Creating ripples

flinging many pebbles at once, or a boulder
for the splash. From the vast diversity

of riverbank, he'd select a slender
stone, toss it in his hand to weigh

as he decided where to aim.
With eyes fixed on the mark, he'd swing

the rock behind him, then bring
an almost horizontal arm swiftly forward

and release the stone to the air.
It would skim the river's surface,

hopping five or even seven times -
skip, skip, skip, skip, skip, sink.

He would help each child in their search,
discuss the optimal width

and lightness of the rock, let them
discern their own requisites

in a skimming stone. He'd model the timing
of the turn, the precise angle of arm

and hand. The children threw their stones
into the awa, each hop a victory, each early

plop into the water was motivation
to find another perfect stone, and go again.

Today, as I think of the man I married
it's this light memory I select. May it kiss

the surface of the waters, may it
never go under.

Te Awakairangi

by Jasmine Hampshire

Te Awakairangi

Flowing from the Tararua peaks,
Through whenua rich in history,
Your waters whisper the stories of our Tūpuna.

With the arrival of foreign ships, the tides began to turn,
Colonial forces altered your course,
Changed your name,
Diverted your waters,
Drained you.
Your mauri, strained and tainted by the weight of “progress”.

Te Awakairangi,
Flowing from the Tararua peaks,
Through whenua rich in history,
Your waters whisper stories of struggle, of loss.

Your waters once pure, now carry scars,
Polluted by industry,
Constrained by concrete,
The echo of modernity felt in every ripple.
Yet still you endure, a resilient thread through time.
A symbol of survival, of adaptation.

The spirit of our Tūpuna flows within you
In your flow we find the strength to move forward,
Ngā tangata whenua,
 Rising
 Reclaiming
 Restoring.