



JUDGES' COMMENTS

Creative Writing

The Judges

Paul Cornell
Novelist, Screenwriter & Comics

Simon Kernick
Thriller & Crime Writer

Kevin Wignall
Bestselling Author

Sarah Pinborough
Novelist & Screenwriter

Fiona Sampson
Poet & Novelist

The Comments

Special comment from judge, Kevin Wignall:

I would like all the entrants to know that there were many who were impressive enough to be in the top 5. There were also many who didn't quite pull it off but, in whom, I could see the seeds of real talent.

Charlie Bailey – Special Mention

- *I'd say about 20 in total had real merit and I narrowed it down partly by following my own preferences (for example, I'm not big on historical, but there were a couple of historical pieces – notably by Charlie Bailey and Nathan Steward – that were incredibly well done. (Kevin Wignall)*

Verity Baker – Commended

- *Very well put together, a real talent. (Simon Kernick)*

Amy Boatman – Commended

- *I don't really do sci-fi, but this was SO nicely constructed and written with a real flair. (Kevin Wignall)*
- *Powerful, and a really punchy ending. (Simon Kernick)*

Rebecca Davies – Highly Commended

- *I absolutely loved this. Thought it was well-paced, beautifully written and well-structured. Controlled and assured. (Sarah Pinborough)*

Jack Dyer – Special Mention

- *A special mention for the very talented Jack Dyer with his comic monologue. (Kevin Wignall)*

Olivia Ipkendanz – Highly Commended

- *Beguiling, like a cross between Lorca and Scott Walker. (Kevin Wignall)*
- *I loved the scope in this imaginative poem. And a lovely poignant ending. (Sarah Pinborough)*

Alex Masters – 4th Place

- *Again, very assured writing, emotive and descriptive and a great sense of place and time. (Sarah Pinborough)*

Indigo Maynard Watts – Highly Commended

- *A lovely turn of phrase in this poem, and a powerful message delivered with a lightness of touch. (Kevin Wignall)*
- *This was smart and relatable and something a little bit different in a poetry entry. (Sarah Pinborough)*
- *Brilliant, intense, meaningful and beautifully put together. (Simon Kernick)*

Charlotte Minett – 2nd Place

- *Impressive for someone so young to have the confidence to write simply and concisely, not falling back on long words or too much description. She captures the nature of grief and bereavement incredibly well. You could imagine reading a novel by this writer. (Kevin Wignall)*
- *Simple, elegant, poignant and frankly amazing for 16. (Simon Kernick)*

Agata Spasik – 1st Place

- *So simple, so beautifully put together, and really quite profound. (Kevin Wignall)*
- *This made me smile. Very neatly done metaphor and such great, sparse writing. (Sarah Pinborough)*
- *Superb, succinct and profound. (Simon Kernick)*

Nathan Steward – Special Mention

- *I'd say about 20 in total had real merit and I narrowed it down partly by following my own preferences (for example, I'm not big on historical, but there were a couple of historical pieces – notably by Charlie Bailey and Nathan Steward – that were incredibly well done. (Kevin Wignall)*