

The 2020 Birdathon Poetry Contest – a Judgement

Like the birds they were celebrating, islanders' Birdathon poems showed marvellous diversity, ranging from miniaturist haiku to expansive prose poem, and included provocative video as well as a graffiti fence homage to Walt Whitman. All were submitted to the judge without the poets' names attached so as to ensure impartiality. In the judge's opinion, all the submissions deserve a prize, being as poems exist beyond comparison. Nevertheless, two are deserving of at least an Award of Excellence: *Homage to the Tweeters* gives a nod to bebop saxophonist Charlie (Bird) Parker and *Hip-hop Hummingbirds* hops. Bebop and hip-hop birds - too cool. Finally, the First Prize winning submission is: *For the Yellow Rumped Warbler*, a tender glimpse of maternity in inhospitable times. Well done, everyone.

Des

1st Prize

For the Yellow Rumped Warbler Philippa Joly

*The rain thunders
pours rages
out of the dark night
onto and into the once dry ground*

*and what does the warbler do
sitting on her nest
of sticks and grasses
mud and saliva*

*her mate near by with no umbrella
to hold above her
while she does the
labour of sitting*

*Soaked feathers
hard to fluff
over nest bowl of eggs
where rivers have run?*

*In those patient
eggs wait small life
aware of the beat of
their mother's heart*

louder than any rain.

She sits.

Award of Excellence:

Homage to the Tweepers Patti Willis

Charlie Bird
and
Birdland.

Avian improv
and
Ample jazz.

Discordance
and
Sweet.

Fly-away
and
Feathered.

Add riffs
and
Forte harmony.

Tweeting
to raise
the sun
and
the moon.

Don't know
their names,
but sing their songs.

Award of Excellence:

Hip-hop: Hummingbirds Verna Isbister

Tip-tit-tch-tip-tch-tip,
Zeep-zeep-zeep-dip,
Titch-chick-titch-chip,
Sip, zip, sip, zip, zzzzzzz, zip,
Peep, peep, zeep, zeep,
Whirrrrrr, whirrr, zo-om, che-ep,
Chicka-chew, ch-ch-ch-ch, chicka chew,
Bzzzzz, bzzzzz, bzzzzz,
Vroom, zoom, dipz and dive-z-z,
Up, up, up. Sup, sup, sup,
sip, sip, sip,
Fly high. Dive low. Circle and dip.
Like so-go, go, go
To and fro. To and fro

Hip hop, boo-bip-bop!
Joy in motion by the ocean!