

Embargoed until 7pm, 14 December 2011

Refreshing prose poetry collection wins Adam prize

A collection of prose poetry which explores love, science and the imagination, has won the prestigious Adam Foundation Prize in Creative Writing for 2011.

This year's winner is Hera Bird for *And Together We Fight Crime*.

Supported by Wellingtonians Denis and Verna Adam through the Victoria University Foundation, the \$3000 prize is awarded annually to an outstanding student in the Master's in Creative Writing programme at Victoria's International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML).

Bernadette Hall, co-convenor of the Master's programme, was struck by the energy and originality of Hera's work.

"Hera's poetry is as refreshing as spearmint toothpaste. It's vigorous, sparky and assured. It's contemporary culture hooked into real depth of thinking. It's also hugely funny."

Hera has close connections with the IIML, having completed several undergraduate writing courses, and winning both the Maurice Gee prize in Children's Writing and the Story! Inc poetry prize. In 2010 she received an advanced Diploma in Creative Writing from Whitireia Polytechnic.

Award-winning writer Chris Price, one of the examiners for Hera's thesis, found this way of describing the prose poem.

"One of the genre's contemporary masters, Charles Simic, has said, *They look like prose and act like poems, because, despite the odds, they make themselves into fly-traps for our imagination.*"

"While having an immediacy all of its own, Hera's collection also shows the popularity of this form and takes its place alongside the published books of writers such as Airini Beauvais and Joan Fleming."

Damien Wilkins, Senior Lecturer at the IIML, says the standard of folios this year was again extremely high.

"Hera's wonderful work deserves to be championed and this award will provide a great boost, but there were several writers similarly placed and it wasn't an easy decision."

Previous Adam Foundation Prize recipients include acclaimed authors Catherine Chidgey, Paula Morris, William Brandt and Eleanor Catton.

For more information contact Damien Wilkins on (04) 463 6905 or Damien.wilkins@vuw.ac.nz
