

Whitsunday Voices Short Story Competition

Grades 7-8

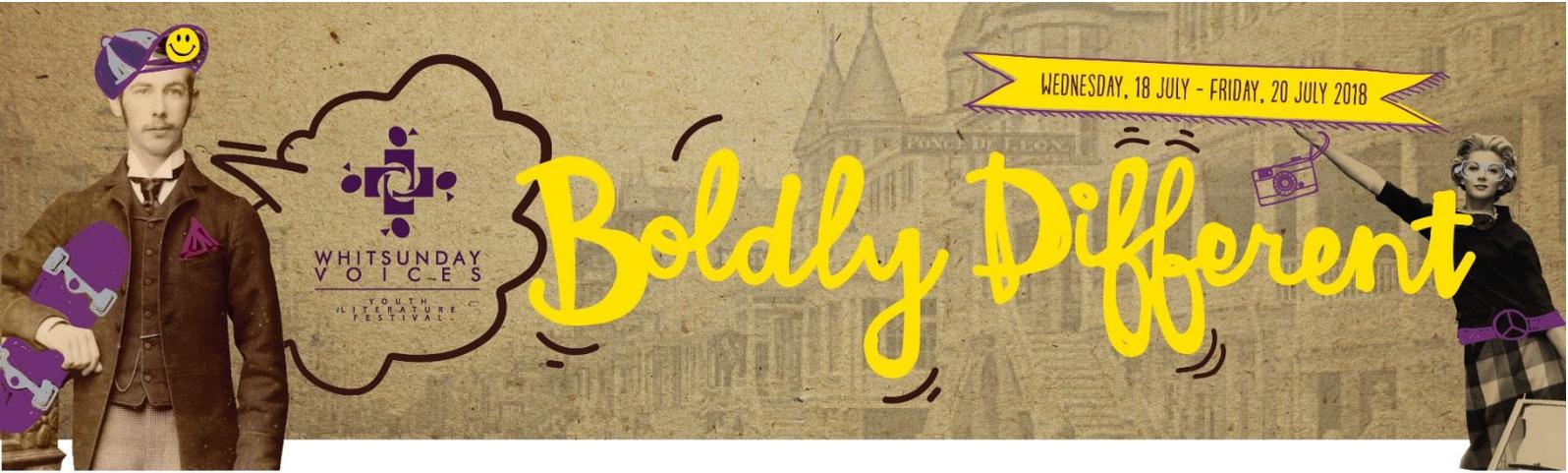
Winner

Ariane Rose Molina for

Boys don't cry, they wear masks

The sky is melting. It's ashy yellows merging with the orange ambers dancing off the sun. the mellow ocean sways back into the horizon and then forward, it's arms of the foam struggling to grasp the shore. I let my breath sync with the waves, in then out, in then out, in...and then out. I let my eyes burn against the blaze of the late afternoon sun and wait until I can focus on the fine line balancing the sky and the ocean. The clouds become a timeless accessory to the art piece that ends the day. My feet sink into the sand, the grains pooling between my toes and burying me up to my ankles. The water races towards me and brims the hole I've made in the sand forcing a gasp out of my lips as the cold water submerges my feet. I lift my feet and make my journey towards my car, feeling the moment make room in my memories.

With my slippers loosely cradling by my two fingers and my towel laying on my shoulders I release a sigh as if it were the weight of the entire world on my shoulders and not a damp towel and as if it were the universe hanging by my fingertips and not two sandy slippers. The sunset has painted its story and ran off into the growing night. The moon

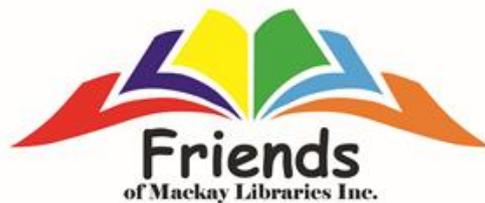


that was once just a faint silhouette before, is now a gleaming silver disc hanging amongst the stars.

I am just a boy, but I feel like I am not worthy to express myself. I feel like I am a large rock sculpted with a blank expression. Like if I were to emote anything other than bravery or anger that I'd shatter and erode. That is suicide though, if I were to break I would no longer be strong, I would no longer be superior, I would no longer be acceptable. As I sit in my car, I feel so, so much shame to let these tears run down my cheeks. I feel as if they would stain my cheeks and after that they would tattoo me, and I would no longer be seen as a boy.

A knock on my window sends my hands rapidly up to clean my face. I scrub so hard at my eyes, begging for the tears to disappear. I would do anything for no one to see this side of me, even at the extent of bloody eyes. I look up, making sure to purse my lips and furrow my brows, wearing the mask of masculinity that's been worn repeatedly. I feel sooner or later, it's bound to break.

Why do I feel this huge burden all for the price of some tears? All for the price of letting everything out? Because I am a boy, and boys don't cry.



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