

## Thumb - luv

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2 share our thumb - luv

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**Chaturika Jayasinghe**

Year 12, St Cuthbert's College, Auckland

## BELL GULLY NATIONAL SCHOOLS POETRY AWARD 2006

☆ **SHORTLIST** ☆

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON  
*Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*



**Bell Gully**

# A Universe in my Head

Have you seen the Eyzrian land  
With carpet'd hills of golden snow  
The thorngrass plains flow to the sand  
Where Ranweck's marble spires grow

Have you seen the province of Eyzria?  
It is hilly and has gold-coloured snow  
There are large thorngrass plains  
And a marble city called Ranweck

Go yonder to the Jindra Head  
And see the diamond shrine of old  
A tribute to the ages dead  
When men were proud and kingdoms bold

In the province of Jindra Head  
There is a shrine made of diamonds  
Constructed many centuries ago  
When the world was better

Sail o'er the blinding crystal sea  
Where lie the vast Memorial Isles  
A solemn land of spirits free  
Tranquil lakes and woods for miles

There is a bright clear sea  
And islands which are very big  
It is a nice, happy place  
With large amounts of nature

And turn your eye to Markeroth  
Where rain is fire and grass is ash  
Few see the thunder-breathing moth  
When all is gone in one mere flash

In the place Markeroth  
Which is burned and nasty  
There is a rare moth that creates thunder  
The place is very dangerous

To see the towers of Zendril tall  
Like silken hands to clasp the sky  
A frozen land of fair for all  
Though secrets black lurk 'neath the eye

Zendril has tall towers  
They are white, and look like hands  
A democracy in a snowy climate  
Although it has bad things also

O to gaze upon the astral plane  
Descending to the planet's gleam  
Is but a curse when visions wane  
To know your world is but a dream

Looking at space  
Then looking at the planet  
Is not good  
When you know it's not real

**Graeme Ninness**  
Year 12, Awatapu College, Palmerston North

# Cellar Door

This is the Age, you say,  
and elbows send the bitter cup  
that scrunches your eyes and shrivels your cheeks  
into a precarious tilt.  
(You said that it would grow on you.)

Oh, I say,  
your excitement not catching.  
Things are still, stagnant.

The best days of our lives, you continue,  
and later, when you can't get the window  
open fast enough, I see that you  
had carrots, discoloured, descending  
in a thin soup of acid and wine.

And later, between more facial contortions,  
you say it will only get better,  
and I can't help but smile.

**Lilian Yong**  
Year 12, Epsom Girls Grammar School, Auckland

# Imogen

The air is unwashed.  
She fills her head with words  
and pink dresses, goes out to dance  
forgets to ask her mother.  
She's home by three  
the cellphone cradled in her palm  
like some big metallic bug.  
She doesn't speak.  
Her hair flat and still,  
her pupils busy.

Imogen's tired of this house;  
its doors cold and weighty  
with winter, the curtains held  
in two tight pigtails  
and those light bulbs; tiny skulls  
their faces flat and defeated.  
She hides in the smallness of her room  
watches the thrown stick  
swallow the sky  
with a pointed tongue.

**Dora Sharpe-Davidson**  
Year 13, St Andrew's College, Christchurch

## Life Cycles

I found a foetus in my egg  
A fleshy body slopped into the bowl  
Where a fat yellow yolk should have been  
No sunny side for this guy

What's up with you said dad  
Period pain I said and went outside  
To sit on the cold back steps  
And listen to the six o'clock news  
Drifting  
    from the silhouette of  
        old Mrs Reiher's open window

Then I found my little brother  
(In his fat yellow fireman's hat)  
Hugged him, in case he didn't know  
That shit happens  
And when you've grown up  
You're not supposed to cry about it

### Jennifer Niven

Year 13, Samuel Marsden Collegiate, Wellington

## Like Tea and Crumpets

I was almost Victoria Jane. Like tea and crumpets.  
Like train stations. Like long gloves.

And then I wasn't. I was "baby Graham"  
and at night, my mother,  
smuggling me out of the hospital nursery,  
would whisper names in my ear,  
trying them on me like hats,  
testing to see which ones tripped off her tongue,  
and which got lodged at the back of her throat.

Daddy wanted to call me Grace. Like his grandmother.  
Like lace handkerchiefs. Like hymns.

But my mother said Grace was a name for old ladies,  
so the tag on my wrist was unchanged, my birth unregistered,  
and my uncles, playing with my toes and counting my fingers,  
laughed and called me Gertrude, Horatia, Augusta.

My aunt said that my name should be Lila. Like scented pillows.  
Like dusty books. Like soft jazz.

Still my mother read books  
and tried to find a name I could live up to,  
while my daddy tucked me into my cot,  
with satin trimmed blankets.

And then I was Sophia Claire. Like Greek philosophers.  
Like Italian screen sirens. Like pink roses.

I was Sophia Claire. Like wisdom.  
Like clarity.      Like me.

### Sophia Graham

Year 13, Epsom Girls Grammar School, Auckland

## Little Sister

After stories last night  
I couldn't help but notice  
The perfection in your milk white cheek,  
The smooth and absolute softness of it,  
Like a mound of icing sugar.

Then, erupting with laughter,  
Your eyes glimmered  
And your mouth grinned open,  
So I was washed with the smell of toothpaste,  
As your warm body twisted away,

Leaving me cold.

### Sarah Wilks

Year 13, Samuel Marsden Collegiate, Wellington

## Madeline

She shows me her brand new skirt  
Sie zeigt mir ihren neuen Rock  
She loves the colour of the theatre lights  
She loves to practise her lines  
Alone  
With plastic actors and dollar bills  
The blondest Brunette

She rolls up every breath  
As if it wasn't safe  
To breathe  
The more she practises, the worse she gets  
At breathing

Every night she stands and delivers  
Words being chipped from her mind  
And spat out  
Convulsing  
She wonders whose weight she's carrying

She feels like her feet are spinning  
In a different direction to her head  
She sees more when she closes her eyes  
Sees music  
Her words can't describe  
Colours

She dreams of a dainty curtsey  
To an audience more than lights  
Instead  
A disjointed dance  
And line after line  
She falls

She loves the colour of the theatre lights

### Andrew Aitken-Fincham

Year 13, St Andrew's College, Christchurch

## Ray

I paused when I heard,  
via long distance call,  
that you had moved from my world  
to another,  
secretly glad that I could have my mother back  
to make cut lunches.

I said goodbye later that night,  
hurried into and then out of a room  
where children should be neither seen nor heard,  
too scared to ask questions,  
a few minutes to make my peace.

Nine daffodil heads opened that week  
— one for each of your girls.  
We cut them;  
the symbol of your battle.  
We carried them that day  
till they were droopy and worn  
when we left them with you.

Three years ago  
you slipped out of my life.  
At the time I was secretly glad,  
confused only  
that my mother  
put Salt Shakers into your coffin  
for 'later on'.

### Lisa Cochrane

Year 13, Epsom Girls Grammar School, Auckland

## strawberries strung on lines

I

the house is vast  
and blank.

every good boy deserves fruit, you  
whisper, your face imprisoned

in me where  
a gazelle creeps through green,

through blood,  
raw and persisting  
as we say grace.

II

the world never seemed  
so bizarre before.

I cut my fingernails short and  
paint them red,  
like red strawberries strung on lines,

stolen lines with a certain kind of grace.

I want to know who will read this, read my  
mind and see me lost within the bed like I  
see it now and

make it clear I could never quit  
your morning coffee or sad smiles.

I will not show this to anyone.

III

we have just begun.

you say *sanguine* and repeat it.  
I am cycling down a hill with the rain,  
soft and endless.

what would you do with the sky

unravel and weave it through your ceiling,  
string it down your harp?

your hands rough and  
dry on my skin.

### Alisha Vara

Year 12, Rangī Ruru Girls' School, Christchurch