

Angela Cleland wins the 2006 Templar Poetry Pamphlet Competition

Angela Cleland has worked at Nelson Croom as an online learning developer since 2004. She has played a central role in building our expertise in transforming content and is an expert in this area outside of Nelson Croom as well. In her spare time Angela writes poetry and prose. Her work has appeared in a number of magazines including Brittle Star, The Frogmore Papers and The Interpreter's House.

We are delighted that Angela's talent has now been recognised publicly. Her first pamphlet of poetry, **Waiting to Burn** has won the Templar Poetry Pamphlet Competition this year. To celebrate the prize and publication of her book, Angela attended the 2006 launch event held at Masson Mill on 26 October. At the event in Derbyshire, the nationally renowned poet Jean Sprackland presented Angela with her prize. She then went on to read a selection of her work.

We caught up with Angela once she got back to her desk to find out more.

Tell us about the event

"The prize ceremony in Derbyshire was very enjoyable, despite having to lay off the wine (I was the last poet to read). It was great to meet Rob Hindle and Judy Brown (the other winners) and to hear them read their work. The setting was fabulous too." Sir Richard Arkwright's Masson Mills at Matlock Bath."

What was it like finding out you had won the prize?

"It's thrilling to be one of the three winners but to start with I was a bit thrown by it all. I was hit by this mixture of *I-can't-believe-it* excitement and *oh-my-god-what-did-I-put-in-the-submission* dread. Fortunately when I looked back over the manuscript it was a pleasant surprise."

So how did you get into writing poetry?

"I've been writing poetry since I was in school – when I was in sixth year of secondary school I won the Scotsman School Magazine Prize for best poem and I've considered myself a bit of a poet ever since. It wasn't till after I finished my undergraduate degree, however, that I started devoting proper time and effort to getting published and improving my work."

Where do you find the inspiration for your poems?

"Sometimes poems come from phrases I like the sound of or from images or ideas that have been rattling around my head for a while; sometimes they come from just sitting down and starting to write. I usually depart quite a bit from my starting point during the writing process, so it can be quite hard to trace back to where the inspiration for an individual piece came from."

What does it mean for your work (poetic, or otherwise)?

"Winning the prize feels like a leap forward in my poetry career. Now that the pamphlet is out I've got two things to focus on: becoming a ruthless self-promoter and finishing off the manuscript for my first full collection. Day to day I change my mind about which is the fun part."

The published pamphlet was officially launched on 23rd November. If you would like to hear Angela read some of her poetry, she will be appearing at Shortfuse, The Camden Head in Angel Islington, London on Thursday 30th November. However, no heckling will be allowed!

"I've been doing an increasing number of readings in the past year, both open mic and arranged, to try and get my name and my face known. As well as traditional off-the-page poetry readings there's a massive performance poetry and spoken word scene in London so there's an exciting range of events to get involved with."

Angela Cleland, Online Learning Developer & Poet, Nelson Croom.