

GWEN HARWOOD POETRY PRIZE 2007 - JUDGES' REPORT

This is an extract from the Judges' Report.

www.islandmag.com/poetryprize/judges_report07.html

WINNER: 'Waiting for Goya' by Sandy Fitts

JUDGES: JENNIFER STRAUSS AND MIKE LADD

The winning poem "*Waiting for Goya*" by Sandy Fitts is a powerful and complex exploration of the relevance of Goya's art, sprung from 'a mad age of faith and war', to our own time as well as, through the locating of its presence in a German art gallery, to Nazi Germany. The poem's meditative quality has a dramatic and argumentative energy that springs partly from the locating of the speaker in a specific place and moment (waiting in a queue for an exhibition) and partly from the projection of an unseen interlocutor, an alter ego, against whose scepticism the 'I' of the poem must defend engagement with the art and the ideas that it provokes. The resulting tonal balance between the colloquial and the rhetorical matches the tension in the poem's movement between an apparent naturalness of speech flow across lines that are highly formalised in length.