

SOCIETY OF WOMEN WRITERS NSW INC
Results of 2005 National Short Story Competition

The 2005 Short Story Competition attracted 125 entries. 'I enjoyed them all,' said judge Professor Virginia Blain, 'although sombre themes prevailed. There were very few comic pieces. Most of the stories were probably to some extent autobiographical.' The final short-list includes a wide range of styles, from the relaxed conversational, to highly stylised, experimental; from everyday realism to far-fetched fantasy; from diamonds in the rough to fully polished gems. The ones that Virginia remembered after the initial selection were the ones that made a strong impact - a 'must do' for a good short story.

The winning story, *The Big Issue*, by Alison Brown, is tightly structured with nothing 'spelled out' for the reader. *Hikikomori*, by Caroline Mahoney, is a dispassionate story, told by a Japanese mother about her schoolboy son who, when faced with a very distressing situation, retreats completely from his life in order to save face. Colleen Gleeson's *Journey Home* is a very tightly written action story about a pregnant widow who is lured into the bush and, through her own willpower, survives a violent attack. Among the other short-listed stories, the highs and lows of life in the bush, relationships between family and friends, the rough and tumble of the school yard and the on-going drama of being Aboriginal were written about with humour and compassion.

Winner: Alison Brown for her story *The Big Issue*



Highly Commended:

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| 2: <i>Hikikomori</i> | by Caroline Mahoney |
| 3: <i>Journey Home</i> | by Colleen Gleeson |
| 4: <i>Skull of the Bull</i> | by Valerie Pybus |
| 5: <i>The Dowry</i> | by Vanessa Proctor |
| 6: <i>How We Met</i> | by Gayle Kennedy |
| 7: <i>As If You Were Born to Us</i> | by Pamela Baker |
| 8: <i>The Woman on the Beach</i> | by Peggy Sacco |
| 9: <i>Renee</i> | by Janice Hull |
| 10: <i>So He Goes</i> | by Jessica Sartor |
| 11: <i>Dog Tales</i> | by Kate Hansen |
| 12: <i>If You Are There</i> | by Libby Topp |