

Terms and Conditions

The Elyne Mitchell Rural Women's Writing Award commemorates Elyne's life and work, and has been established to encourage rural women to write *their stories*

Open over 25 years of age) One **\$1000** Prize Awarded
 Category (Women 15 - 25 years of age) One **\$500**

ers Category (Local Women Residents of either Towong Shire over 15 years of age) One **\$500** Prize Awarded.

ave a specific reference to an Australian rural may be fiction or non-fiction. **The theme for 2010 is**

ed **2,500** words

be number of entries per person, however every entry table fee of **\$10**.

ished, the entrants original work, and in English.

be signed and dated by the author.

be typed, double-line spaced and on A4 size ge email entries, these should be in pdf format. e manuscript must be provided for each entry

ust not appear on any page within the story itself. ne story should contain the title that matches the n, and include the **Word Count**.

mitted, the manuscript is final. The entry may not be erations made.

to keep a copy of their entry, all entries will be

re taken for entries and entries will not be returned. those in breach of the entry conditions will be

Shortlisting:

A shortlist of ten (10) entries in each Category will be decided by the Judges. Short listed authors will be notified by email, mail or telephone.

Each author whose entry is short listed will be invited to attend an Award Announcement and Presentation Ceremony on World Rural Women's Day 15th October 2010 in Corryong.

Closing Date for Entries : 5.00pm 30th June 2010

Winners Announced: 15th Oct, 2010



Send Entries to:

The Elyne Mitchell Award
 PO Box 267, Corryong, Vic 3707
Email: entries@elynemitchell.com

Please note:

All entrants retain the copyright of their work, but the Friends of Corryong Library Inc. reserve the right to publish all or part of the work for promotional purposes where they see fit, both online and in print.

Entry Form

2010

This form must be completed and attached to your entry. The \$10 entry fee is required with this form.

Title of Story
FIGHTING AIR

Authors Name
ROSIE BRIDGE

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Email



Category entered
 Open (women over 25 years of age)
 Emerging (women 15 - 25 years of age)
 Local (women over 15 years of age) resident in either Towong or Tumbarumba Shire

Word Count **1497**
 I enclose payment/have made payment of **\$10 per entry**.
 Cheques to: **Friends of Corryong Library**.

EFT to BSB: 803070 Acct: 52628

I hereby affirm that I am the author of my story, all entry details are correct and I have read and agree to the Terms and Conditions of Entry.



Signature
Rosie Bridge

Dated
29/6/10

Fighting Air

Word Count : 1497

The sub zero air bit viciously into her face and clubbed her chest, invisible freezing hands trying desperately to rip through her layers. Her core gave involuntary shudders as it repelled the claustrophobic cold. She dug her hands deep into her pockets and moved towards the shed. The ice that Jack Frost had gently laid down the night before grazed her shoe laces and squeaked underfoot. The bike seat was a sword that speared unexpectedly straight through her armour. Cold shot through her body and the shock set her off in haste. As she picked up speed down the driveway the wind increased the ferocity of its assault, driving at her cheeks and ripping at her fingers through their gloves. The attack was short lived however. By the time she reached the hill into town she was sweltering, her gloves ripped off and stuffed in the pocket of her heavy coat which was the major causation of her inescapable heat. The town was already waking up. She could see the warm light emitted from the bakery, and resisted the temptation to walk in and grab an early morning sausage roll. The hot golden glow of pastry and the almost physical wafts of baking bread were passed over for an orange and a muesli bar she had in her bag. Saving her dollars. Saving her life. It had been her motto for the year. She followed the meandering flow of cars in the one direction they were all heading. The one direction the town always faced. The old football oval.

Today was her last game. It had been a long relationship. Nine years of Saturday mornings. Of Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Of endless laps around the football oval as the light slipped away quickly over the surrounding, watching ring of mountains. Of the continuous figure of eights of relationships and breakups that were discussed over leg stretches. 'Chris passed out at like nine o'clock at Hooksey's party and Kailey was *so* pissed with him she spent the night in Stevo's ute. Now Chris hates

them both, like Stevo *and* Kailey, and has gone back to Simone who Kailey *always* knew was a two faced back stabber'. She had watched as all the boys and girls circled around each other, disrupted constantly epic supernovas of love and the inevitable, devastating avalanches of heartbreak. But when she took a step away from the severity of the drama, the monotony of these stories killed her. It was the same, always. The same people, the same place, the same dusty framed shot of the 1973 premier football team that looked down from above the footy club bar and watched the same feeble attempts by boys and the continual comforting of crying girls. The same, the same. For the last year, however, that photo was a shadow over her, that photo and the community that revolved underneath it. She was too close. If she didn't become a part of it, live and breathe through every catastrophe of the netball club, she could not stand to be near it. And in a town which revolved so completely around that photo of the premiership and the boys that ran past it every Saturday morning, to not be involved was to not be alive.

Next week she was leaving. A pilgrimage that had been long awaited to the streets of Melbourne, the heaven that would be new people, new places and new ideas. This past year would all become worth it. She would spend her hard earned dollars on the lattes and concerts and boots and fun she'd seen her friends consume with guiltless ease on her brief visits down. Here felt so far away. Working six days a week at the milk bar, she never quite rid herself from the omnipresent stench of fish and chips. The beginning of the year had held some glamour with the rush of finishing school, the summer of saying goodbye to old life and a glimmering goal of youth allowance stretched against the horizon. In the last months however, as the end drew closer, and an escape loomed larger, the reality and monotony of her existence punished her

every day. Every potato cake she saved from the boiling oil was an insult. Every cup of mediocre coffee she poured into the cheap white foam cups she wanted to throw in the face of the unsuspecting customer. She wanted some action. And now finally she was leaving, and the town would continue on its sleepy old carousel for ever. Chris and Kailey will get married, and Simone will be the bridesmaid, and she won't be around to watch any of it. She'll travel. She'll meet people with dark skin, they'll talk to her in another language. She'll meet people who have never heard of the 1973 Northern-District Premiership.

Her last game. She chains the bike up against a pole and sneaks down the back way to the oval, preferring to get mud on her shoes than pay the absurd entry fee that's channelled straight to the footballer's pockets. The frosty leaves slip underneath her as she scrambles through the bush towards the already tooting horns and bustle of heavily clothed supporters. The game is fast. Non-eventful. She loves the feeling of adrenaline on these crisp winter mornings, fighting against an unknown team and fighting against the cold air. The ball hits her fingers and travels up and down the court continuously. Another pattern. Up. Then down. More repetition. She would give anything for just a glimpse of something out of the ordinary. Afterwards half the girls move off to dish out pies and hotdogs on canteen duty. Dutifully flirting with the footballers. Dutifully being proper country women. Dutifully making her sick. She goes and lies on the cool stones that lay in the paddock high above the oval and watches the little men and women running around. Distanced, she feels better. She does love the country. The openness of it, the fresh air, the distances. She loves the immense stillness that envelopes her whenever she's alone, knowing she's the only person alive in the world. It was just this year that had killed her. The loneliness. The

frustration. Of knowing there was more to see, and to learn, and instead being stuck in this slow, slow circle of boredom.

The party tonight was just out of town. She considers not going but decides that with the alternative of yet another night in front of the TV, she wants to say goodbye. Her mum drops her off and tells her to meet out the front again at twelve thirty sharp. It was either that or stay the night, and early morning escapes are even less glamorous than early pick ups. Besides, it's too cold for a swag. The fire burns high. At some stage someone would throw some fire works into it. Everyone would scream. Later when it was just red hot simmering stumps the boys would jump over it. Hard core. Timmy from the news agency tries to take her for a walk down to the paddock but she can't take his blue Cruiser lips seriously. They moved around her, drinking, smoking, asking. She warms her hands against the rush of heat from the fire, her eyes burning from the flared orange. She walks away. She sees the McKenzie girl, no more than Year 10 throwing up near the fence. She needs to get out, to get as far away from them as possible. She's finished here. So finished. She grabbed her bag and left the confusion of the party behind her. Left them moving as they always would. She starts to jog against the misty freeze of night air towards the town. Her head spins with the cold and with the alcohol. She knows where she is going.

The football club stood at dark eerie angles. Low clouds settled on the vast oval and the windows were fogged up. It was easy to get in. It was easy to burn. The petrol was already there from the after footy fires. Even the matches. It was ridiculous.

Laughable. She poured just one line. Right across the bar, where the girls served the boys beer. Right under the premiership photo. She lit the match and was instantly

warmed by the flames. They ate it. They ate the photo and exhaled dirty smoke in celebration. They reached hungrily for more. The flames danced for her, far more elegantly than any humans had in this dusty brown room. She watched. Red and blue and orange and climbing and twisting and filling. The air filled with heat and colour and energy instead of mouldy repetition. Then she ran. For the first time in a year, she wasn't angry. Pounding through the deserted town. Thrashing through the knowing night. Towards newness. Towards alive. And knowing that though her oldness would soon fall back into place, for a moment, it would feel her spark.