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State Library announces 2021 Young Writers Award winner

An evocative story about a road trip through mid-west America has won the State Library of Queensland's 2021 Young Writers Award.

Ellen Vickerman from Carindale won the \$2,000 prize for 'Sun Queens' which will also be published in *Griffith Review*. Ellen's writing has been recognised in prestigious prizes around the country. She is currently working on a short story collection.

The annual Young Writers Award is presented in partnership with *Griffith Review* and is open to Queenslanders aged between 18 to 25. It has recognised the literary talents of some of the country's most exciting young writers including Miles Franklin Award-winning Tara June Winch, Benjamin Law, Shastra Deo, Rebecca Jessen and Christopher Currie.

The judges said Ellen's story about two young women fleeing a former life was confidently written, with a "vivid, palpable sense of place and impressive use of language".

"Style was the key strength of this piece and the element that really made it stand out."

First runner-up Zarin Nuzhat, 25, Kuraby, was awarded \$500 for her short story, 'Friday', which judges noted was a "compelling and convincing story that was effectively structured and emotionally moving".

In finalising their results, the judges said they "were struck by the breadth of voices and experiences captured in this year's stories".

"We thoroughly enjoyed the judging process and came away feeling optimistic and excited about the future of Queensland writing," the panel said.

The Young Writers Award has been held by State Library for more than 20 years and encourages, inspires and champions the writing of young Queenslanders.

2021 Young Writers Award winners and finalists:

- Winner: 'Sun Queens' by Ellen Vickerman, 22, Carindale
- First runner-up: 'Friday' by Zarin Nuzhat, 25, Kuraby
- Second runner-up: 'Precious Cargo' by Ellie Kaddatz, 22, Newmarket
- Third runner-up: 'Halcyon' by Eden Annesley, 19, Auchenflower

Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald:

“State Library is a home for diverse Queensland stories, and we are extremely proud to support emerging young writers.”

“We are thrilled to continue our partnership with *Griffith Review* which elevates award winners with high-profile exposure to their work.”

Quotes from Dr Ashley Hay, Editor, *Griffith Review*:

“*Griffith Review* has always had a strong commitment to discovering and encouraging Australia’s emerging voices, and we’re delighted to continue our partnership with the Queensland Young Writers Award as part of that tradition.”

“This competition is a great conduit for new voices, and we congratulate all the talented finalists on this year’s shortlist. *Griffith Review* looks forward to welcoming this year’s winner into the mix of stories we support and share, and to introducing them to our readers.”

More information: slq.qld.gov.au/get-involved/fellowships-awards-residencies/young-writers-award

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