

**Lake Macquarie Speech & Drama Eisteddfod  
16 Years and Under Championship**

**Heatwave  
By C.J Dennis**

Day after day, week after burning  
week. A ruthless sun has sucked the  
forest dry. Morn after anxious morn  
Mens' glances seek the hills,  
Hard etched against a harder sky,  
Gay blossoms droop and die-menace is  
here. As day draws to its peak.  
Amid the listless gums along the creek; hot little breezes sigh.

Today- the threat took shape- the birds were  
dumb. Once more a sullen savage morning  
broke.  
Silence told that trembling fear had come  
To bird and beast and all the forest folk.  
One little wisp of smoke, far in the south, behind the listless gum  
Grew a purple pall, like some far drum, a distant muttering broke.

Red noon beheld red death comes  
shouting o'er These once green slopes- a  
leaping living thing.  
Touched by its breath, tree after tree wore a fiery crown,  
And though to mock a king, a ghastly blossoming of sudden  
flame That died and was no more.  
And where a proud old giant towered of yore- stood now a blackened  
thing.

Fierce raved the conquering flame, as demons  
rave, Earth shook to thunders of the falling  
slain, Brambles and bushes, once so gay and  
brave,  
Shrank back and writhed and shrieked and shrieked  
again- Like sentient things in pain.

Gone from the forest, all that kind spring  
gave. And now- at lagged last, too late to save  
Comes soft, ironic rain.