

# Memories of the Outback

by Richard D. Martin.

## First Prize Poem

My thoughts return to the Gibber Plains,  
Way out in the far out-back,  
Astride a horse, behind a mob,  
Along the cattle track.  
Where the "Tailer" must rise with the Morning Star,  
On the camp out on the plains,  
He hears the ring of a tell-tale bell,  
Or the jingle of hobble chains.

As the "tailer" brings the horses back,  
Each horse is on the run,  
While the stars still peep, their flying feet  
Hurry back to the beat of the sun.  
Then the men arise, with drowsy eyes  
And eat their hurried snacks.  
Then they grab their mounts and saddle up  
And swing astride their backs.

Then the men are ready upon their mounts,  
To begin the new-born day,  
To startle the mob with yells and cries,  
Till the mob is under way.  
Watching, tense, for the mob to move,  
As he waits beside a log,  
To stop a stray as it breaks away,  
Is old "Blue", the cattle dog.

Then the whips ring out and the men, they shout,  
As the sun lights up the sky  
And the mob then moves as they lift tired hooves  
'Til they reach the next "Gilgai".  
For the days grow long and the job's no fun  
Out on the open plain,  
And the flies and the sun, they come as one,  
As they add to the drover's pain.

Now the heatwaves dance as the men advance,  
With the mob across the plain,  
And the cattle thirst and the men, they curse,  
As they scan the sky for rain.  
But they push along as the day draws on,  
Not far from the big "Gilgai".  
Then the mob goes mad as a scent they've had  
Of the water that's nearby.

The cattle break as three men it takes  
To try and hold the lead,  
At the whip-lash crack, they hold them back  
And stop a big stampede.  
Then the cook makes camp on the "Gilgai's" bank  
As the sun sinks in the west.  
While the men prepare themselves to watch,  
Old "Blue" the dog's at rest.

*This entry, a Prose Poem, won a Special Consolation Prize.*

## Spring

by Andrea Holten (12) c/o. P.O., Bowraville.

Spring is the most enjoyed season of the year. It is like a trumpet, calling all sleeping nature to awaken and rejoice.

Trees which lost their leaves when winter's icy fingers clutched at them have now a green robe of grandeur. Blossoms, pink, red and yellow adorn the trees, which are proud to hold such a burden.

When the world awakens the first thing that is heard is the song of the birds, who, having burst into song, send forth glorious golden notes which fill the cool, crisp air with melody.

Many migratory birds, who, when the first blasts of winter come, fly away, now re-appear and join in the spring festival.

Fleecy clouds float overhead in a mirror-clear sky of azure blue. The foam crested waves of the ocean ripple and sparkle and the rivers in their courses lose their muddy appearance and become sheets of silver.

The bees look so attractive as they venture into the centres of beautiful fragrant flowers, with the sun shining on their gauzy wings. The flowers like the visits of the bees, and I feel sure, must sway in the gentle breeze, to the tune of the birds which twitter as they have their daily baths.

We all see these things, and many more, from the rising to the setting of the sun and we feel sorry but not discouraged when darkness descends upon the earth, for we have the satisfaction of knowing these things will begin again when Mother Earth raises the curtains of darkness which screen her glories during the hours of rest.

*(Judge's remarks: A prose poem—very pleasant to read.)*



**Dorothy Stewart of Silverton, near Broken Hill**