



Fraser Prize essay 2016

Entries were assessed by a Reading Panel drawn from the journal *Theology in Scotland* and the Scottish Church Theology Society.

The views of the Reading Panel:

The reading panel were grateful for the opportunity to read the richly-varied selection of essays submitted for the Fraser prize 2016. The topic this year was “*What is the significance of poetry for theology today?*” Issues which could be addressed included, but were not limited to: the notion of poetry as prayer; the theology of particular poets and the way this influences their work; poetic expression as theological reflection.

The submissions fell into several categories: Some started from the set question and discussed it in a very broad way. Some focused on a particular poet or theologian, exploring the author’s use of theology, or theological themes. Others adopted a more theoretical approach to poetics. Yet others fell somewhere between these: either very personal in their approach, or using doctoral material already developed.

The winning essay was by Bruce Pass, “Where have all the poets gone?”

In the assessment of the Reading Panel, the winning essay was:

‘A skilful and sophisticated appreciation of the role of poetry in the life of the Church, and a good analysis of the consequences of its absence there. The author combines well-informed analysis with grounded individual experience. It is, moreover, a polished piece of work. The analysis is clearly written and well-informed, but it is the reflection on what happens when poetry is absent that makes this a particularly valuable essay. It most closely fulfils the brief given to the essay writers, it is therefore, the clear winner.’