

THE INDIE BOOK AWARD 2009



CATEGORY WINNER CHILDREN'S BOOK

Pearl Verses the World by Sally Murphy,
illustrated by Heather Potter
Published by Walker Books Australia



What the judging panel said:

- This is an incredibly powerful short book written in verse. The illustrations fit the text perfectly and the story is both sad and ultimately uplifting.
- The book tracks a young girl's relationship with her grandmother who has dementia and sensitively delves into the grieving process. It had me hooked from the beginning!
- This is a deceptively simple story, but one that has immense compassion contained within it. *Pearl Verses the World* is hauntingly beautiful, and although I cried, I also smiled!
- Sally Murphy's simple verse is beautifully complimented by Heather Potter's soft illustrations – a superb package.

About the book:

At school, Pearl feels as though she is in a group of one. Her teacher wants her to write poems that rhyme but Pearl's poems don't. At home, however, Pearl feels safe and loved, but her grandmother is slowly fading, and so are Mum and Pearl. When her grandmother eventually passes away, Pearl wants life to go back to the way it was and refuses to talk at the funeral. But she finds the courage to deliver a poem for her grandmother that defies her teacher's idea of poetry – her poem doesn't rhyme; it comes from the heart. This is a moving illustrated verse novel about a girl dealing with isolation at school, and with her grandma's illness at home.

About the author:

Sally Murphy was born in Perth and still lives with her family in Western Australia. She lives in Corrigin, a tiny town in the Wheatbelt, halfway between Perth and Kalgoorlie, where there only sixty people live. In 2001 she decided to dedicate herself to her dream of becoming a children's author and has now published 27 books.

The author's comments about the Indie Book Award:

"As a reader, I've always found that independent booksellers are the place to go when you want someone to actually know something about the book you are looking for, or to make recommendations when you don't know what you're looking for. As an author, I know that my little book could easily be lost amongst the dozens of series and hundreds of other new releases. That's why I'm aware of the role of the bookseller who actually cares about books enough to be able to place the right book in the right hands. That hand-selling makes a huge difference to the success of a book like mine – and it happens in independent bookstores."