

## MILITELLO BROTHERS LITERARY PRIZE 2008

By Annalisa Coppolaro

Again this year in November the Italian Cultural Institute hosted the lovely ceremony to attribute the prizes for the Militello Brothers Literary Prize, organised by the Cultural Group Escape in Art to promote the Italian language and Italian creative writing in the world. The sponsors, Lillo and Giovanni Militello, have been promoting this event for several years, a competition among writers in Italian, divided in different categories, for a Prize which is becoming more and more prestigious. This year the prize also had interesting moments dedicated to some authors who have published books recently and who have taken part in the prize in the past.

The ceremony started at 6 pm, the Jury was present, with all its members: Prof. Luca Paci, prof. Laura Lepschy, prof. Maurizia Trowell, dott. Ennio Falabella, and the honorary president of the Jury, Donna Sandra Aragona, the Ambassador's wife. The Militello Brothers were also there as sponsors.

A hundred people were in the audience, and many were the young people, including some students from Croydon arrived to support their school friend Bhavina Parmar, whose story was selected by the Jury. All these students are studying Italian and often follow the theatre show by Escape in Art.

Some of the winning authors were given the book by Annalisa Coppolaro-Nowell "How to live like an Italian", a fast-selling guide to the arts and lifestyle of Italy, which was introduced by Pino Ferrara at the beginning of the Prize. The book was donated by the Publishing house Anova/Portico. Annalisa took part in the Fratelli Militello Prize in the past and her story was among the winning ones. Unfortunately How to live like an Italian was not approved of by the new ICI director who considered it too critical against Berlusconi, although Donna Aragona herself took the defense of the well-know work by Coppolaro: an unprecedented event.

Another author who won the prize in the past was also at the ICI, Gianni Bonincontro, with his book "Gog and Magog", and a book by Escape in art, "Racconti di Londra" (Tales of London), was also for sale at the Italian Bookshop section.

Silvana Camilletti read the winning poems and stories, and the audience was really moved by some of her great reading.

The opening speech by Pino Ferrara went back to telling the story of the prize, quoting the essential role that the Militello Brothers have had for the Italian community in London, with their mecenatismo for new writing and the arts , and generally their work to support the diffusion of the Italian language abroad. Their restaurant Concordia Notte is not in Craven Road anymore, it was sold by the brothers, but this prize is still promoting our language and culture. "With the closing of Concordia Notte a piece of history of the Italian community in London disappeared – Ferrara underlined – as this place was a meeting place for artists, writers, politicians, a bit like Trattoria Bagutta in Milan."

Many were the poems and short stories sent to the competition, all of high quality. Here is the list of the winners and mentioned for this edition. Poetry: 1<sup>st</sup> **Viaggio infinito** (Roberto Scovazzi, Milano), 2<sup>nd</sup> **Racconti di paese** (Giuseppe Auletta, Epton), 3<sup>rd</sup> **Le vecchiarelle** (Noris d'Achille, Londra), mentioned ex æquo: **Viali di ghiaia** (Fernando di Gregorio, Ariano Irpino), **Cerchi** (Oliviero Pesce, Londra), **Tela di ragno** (Luigi Omiccioli, Londra). For the Short story section: 1<sup>st</sup> **Sangue nero** (Franco Zarpellon, Mestre), 2<sup>nd</sup> **CilieGINE Rosse** (Katia Brantani, Bologna), 3<sup>rd</sup> **Il sogno** di Tonino (Michele Ciancia, Londra), mentioned æ aequo, **C.A.M.P.A** (Oliviero Pesce, Londra), **La sveglia** (G.Claudia Corrao, Londra), **Diario** (Bhavina Parmar (Croydon).

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