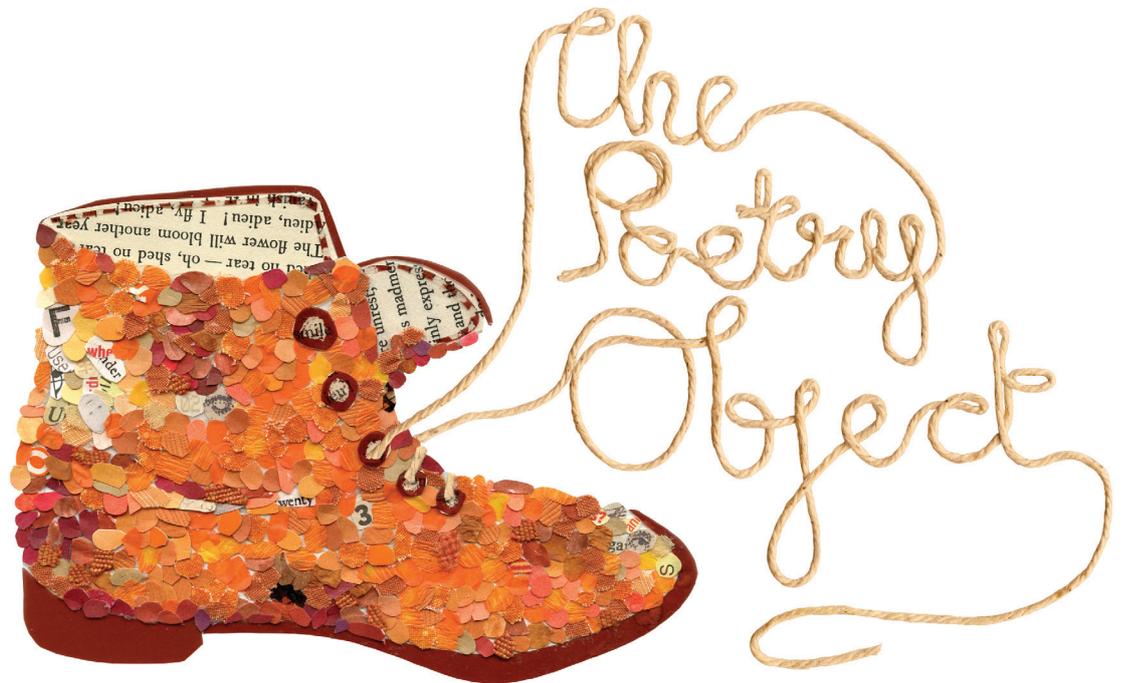




**THE
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ROOM
COMPANY**



NSW Public Schools (Sydney Region) and
The Red Room Company present



A Display of Poems and Photographs
in Response to Special Objects



Education
& Training



The Poetry Object

“I wish spoken words could be captured and kept in a locket”.

- from David Mitchell's *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*



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The Poetry Object

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The Poetry Object

An Overview of The Poetry Object

Welcome to *The Poetry Object*, a poetry writing project for Years 3-10 students devised by The Red Room Company for NSW Public Schools (Sydney Region).

The Poetry Object was commissioned by Dr. Phil Lambert, Regional Director of NSW Public School (Sydney Region).

Students and staff are asked to

- compose a poem of no more than 20 lines about an object that is special to them. This object will be known as a talismanic object.
- submit a digital photograph of the special or talismanic object that inspired their poem.

Schools are encouraged to organize their own display or installation of poems, objects and photographs. *The Poetry Object* invites schools to submit digital photographs of these school-based and devised displays.

Teaching and learning strategies to support teachers as they implement *The Poetry Object* with their students are available as free downloads from The Red Room Company website. These resources include a PowerPoint to introduce and explain the project to students.

An exhibition of the poems and photographs produced by schools will be curated by The Red Room Company and hosted at a significant public venue (to be announced). A concluding event recognizing school achievement will be held at this venue during October 2011.

This event will include the delivery of the 2011 Red Room Company Minislec by poet and freelance writer and educator Dr. Felicity Plunkett. This short address will consider poetry and poetry education in Australia.



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The entries for *The Poetry Object* will be judged by renowned Australian poet Joanne Burnes, broadcaster Julian Morrow from ABC's *The Chaser*, Michele Mawer (Sydney Region 7-12 Literacy Consultant) and Tony Britten (Education Director for The Red Room Company).

Recognition of student achievement will be for students, teachers and schools. This will include the awarding of certificates of commendation, publication on The Red Room Company website and in the *2011 Papercuts Anthology* and a mentorship with a contemporary Australian poet. Poems and images produced by students will also feature on The Red Room Company's website.

Entries should be submitted electronically. Go to The Red Room Company website for details

The final date for submission of entries will be no later than 5:00 pm on Friday 19 August 2011 (Week 5 of Term 3).



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Information For Participating Schools About *The Poetry Object*

You can read a list of Frequently Asked Questions about *The Poetry Object* on The Red Room Company website: www.redroomcompany.org

What is the philosophy of *The Poetry Object*?

"Poetry is alchemy; it transforms and exposes us."

The Red Room Company's aim is to create, promote and distribute poetry by new and emerging Australian writers to the public in unusual ways.

The Red Room Company's intention is that the focus of the competition will not be on the prizes students, schools and teachers may win.

Rather the focus is to be providing students and school staff with opportunities to compose, share and publish their own poetry.

What types of free downloadable teaching and learning resources are being provided to support participating schools?

A wide selection of teaching and learning resources to support teachers as they engage in poetry composing are available on The Red Room Company website.

As the project is open to Years 3-10 across a diverse range of schools teachers are encouraged to select those resources that suit the needs and interests of their students.

The resources include warm up and pre-writing activities to assist students to compose their own poetry as well as models of poems about special objects from The Red Room Company archive and by young adults.

Also included is a PowerPoint presentation to introduce and explain the project to students.

These resources are available as free downloads from our website.



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Please feel free to contact Tony Britten, The Red Room Company's Education Director, if you would like assistance or advice about implementing *The Poetry Object* with your students.

What will be produced by participants in *The Poetry Object*?

The focus of this project is giving students and school staff the opportunity to compose and publish their own poetry.

The Red Room Company has a strong tradition of developing relationships between poetry and the visual arts. Participants will also have the opportunity to submit digital photographs of the object that inspired their poetry. Schools will also have the opportunity to devise their own school-based display or installation of their poems and digital photographs.

Individual student task:

Each student participating in the project is asked to compose a poem inspired by an object that is special or meaningful to him or her.

This object is known as a talismanic object.

This poem should have a title and be no more than 20 lines in length. Students may write in any form or genre.

Students are asked to take a digital photograph of the object that inspired their poem (preferred file format is as a jpeg, no bigger than 5 MB, scanned at 300 dpi).

Both the poem and photograph will be submitted as part of the competition.

Individual teacher or school staff member task:

Teachers and staff at participating schools are also encouraged to submit their own poem about and a digital photograph of an object that is special to them

Group student task:

Within their school, year or class group teachers are encouraged to publish and display the poems and digital images produced by students in a group installation of their own interpretation.

Schools are asked to submit a digital photograph of this group installation and a written explanation of their approach to their cabinet.

The written explanation should be no more than 250 words in length.



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How is *The Poetry Object* judged?

The entries for *The Poetry Object* will be judged by:

- Joanne Burns, renowned Australian poet who has worked in the Papercuts national poetry education program
- Julian Morrow, broadcaster and member of ABC Television's *The Chaser*
- Michele Mawer, Literacy Consultant for NSW Public Schools (Sydney Region)
- Tony Britten, Education Director for The Red Room Company

The judges will use criteria produced by The Red Room Company and NSW Public Schools (Sydney Region).

The Red Room Company will compile a short list of finalists from the entry pool for consideration by all judges. The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

How will *The Poetry Object* recognize and reward student achievement?

The most important way that the project will recognize and reward student achievement is through public display of their poems and photographs in an exhibition at a significant public venue in Sydney (to be announced).

Individual schools can also recognize student achievement by coordinating a school-based display or installation of student poems and photographs. Schools are also encouraged to recognize student achievement through authentic modes of publication within their community. This might include publication on blogs, websites or class notice boards, in newsletters and in readings of poems at assemblies or year meetings.

Other forms of recognition and reward include:

The Red Room Company will provide the student who composes the winning poem with:

- a "one-off" mentorship with a contemporary Australian poet
- visit to the school and reading by a contemporary Australian poet
- publication of their poem online and in the *2011 Papercuts Anthology*

The Red Room Company will provide the teacher who composes the winning poem with:

- a selection of Red Room Company publications including the Poems to Share boxed poetry card teaching resource
- a selection of stationary and lifestyle products from The Red Room Company partner Corban and Blair
- publication of their poem online and in the *2011 Papercuts Anthology*



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The Red Room Company will provide the school that produces the winning photograph and written explanation of their school-based group installation with:

- publication of their photograph and written explanation of their group cabinet online and in the *2011 Papercuts Anthology*
- visit to the school and reading by a contemporary Australian poet.

A selection of short-listed student and teacher poems from the competition may be published in *The Sun-Herald* "Extra" lift out section. The Red Room Company compiles the poem that is published in "A Poet's View" each week in this newspaper.

Certificates of commendation will be presented to teachers, students and schools who reach the short-list for each aspect of the competition. These have been designed by The Red Room Company's design partners, Blood and Thunder.

Final date for submission: All entries must be submitted no later than 5:00 pm on Friday 19 August 2011 (Week 5 of Term 3).



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How do students and teachers submit their poems and digital photographs?

All submissions will be made electronically. No paper or hard copy submissions will be accepted.

A Word document containing an entry form for submission is available for downloading from The Red Room Company website: www.redroomcompany.org

Instructions:

- students should paste or type their poem into the space provided in the electronic entry form document.
- please title the Word document that is the entry form with the student's name and school. eg martinnguyenmosmanhigh.doc or elizabethvuleticcroydonprimary.doc
- each poem must be sent as a JPEG file attached to an email.
- attach the entry form to an email and send it to the following address:
thepoetryobject@redroomcompany.org
- please include the student's name and school in the subject line of the email.
e.g. Subject: Ali Hasnan Sydney Boys' High
- the photograph of the object should be sent preferably as a jpeg file attached to the email.

The title of this Word document should be the student or teacher's name and school.
eg. alihansydneyboyshigh.jpeg or janeoharaplumptonhighschool.jpeg

The name and school of the student submitting their poem must be provided in the subject line of the email.



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The Object Project Sample Entry Form

Please download from The Red Room Company website: www.redroomcompany.org
Please save this document using your name and school eg. alihanansydneyboyshigh.doc

NAME OF STUDENT/ TEACHER:

AGE (OPTIONAL FOR TEACHERS!):

YEAR LEVEL:

SCHOOL:

SCHOOL ADDRESS:

SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER:

NAME OF CONTACT TEACHER:

POEM TITLE:

POEM (no more than 20 lines):

Cut and paste or type your poem here.





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Talismanic Object Poem Activity And Pre-Writing Activities

This section contains the talismanic object poem activity and some pre-writing activities.

A selection of pre-writing activities designed to warm up students before they begin writing their talismanic object poem are available as a free download on The Red Room Company website.

These pre-writing activities are NOT intended to teach you, the teacher, to suck eggs!

Some tasks will obviously suit some year levels, classes or students better than others.

You know your students and their needs best. Choose pre-writing activities that suit your students' interests and needs, as well as your teaching style.

The pre-writing activities are designed to help students:

- overcome poetry anxiety by beginning with smaller, more achievable and scaffolded writing tasks
- appreciate the importance of imagery in poetry
- identify and then avoid clichés in their writing
- understand the importance of word choice in poetry
- consider structure: the impact of lineation and stanza breaks
- practice describing and writing about an object
- recognize how their writing is a response to the writing of others
- understand the importance of drafting

The role of the classroom teacher:

Teachers will be encouraged to explore The Red Room Company website with their



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students and consider the work of students and schools who have previously

Teachers are asked to distribute and explain information about the competition.

It would be preferred if they could spend one or two lessons using the teaching and learning resources provided by The Red Room Company to introduce scaffold the poetry composing task that is the focus of *The Poetry Object*.

Teaching and learning resources provided by The Red Room Company would encourage and provide models for the drafting of student writing.

Participating schools or classes are encouraged to create their own school- based installation or display that showcases the work of all participants in the project. Possible approaches to such an installation are outlined in a free downloadable handout on The Red Room Company website.

Schools are encouraged to also submit photographs and a written explanation of their approach to a cabinet or installation of the class group's talismanic object poems.

Teachers and other school staff members are also encouraged to compose their own Talismanic Object Poem and submit this with an accompanying photograph. There will be a specific prize and awards category for poems by teachers and staff within the school community.



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The Poetry Object Talismanic Object Poem Activity:

I will bring my talismanic object to class on the following day and date: / /

TASK:

Your task is to compose a poem about a talismanic object.

A talismanic object is an object that is special to you.

The choice of genre or the form of poem is up to you.

Your poem should be no more than 20 lines in length.

Your talismanic object poem has two purposes:

1. to describe your talismanic object for a reader who is unfamiliar with it
and
2. to explain to the reader why your object is special to you

Before you begin to draft your poem you will complete a free writing exercise that will help you to develop ideas and material for your poem.

You will also need to submit a digital photograph of the object that inspires your poem.

What is a talismanic object?

A talisman is often said to be any object that brings a person protection or good luck. Some people carry a plant, coin, ring or a piece of jewellery to act as a good luck charm.

However a talismanic object can also be seen as an object that is special to you.

It may not be worth anything to anybody else. It could be something that is only precious and important to you.

You may own more than one talismanic object. The object may belong to someone else,



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but still be special to you.

It is this second type of talismanic object, the one that is an object that is special to you, that will be the subject matter of your poem.

What are my responsibilities as a student?

In order to complete this task you will need to bring your talismanic object to class on a specified date. If you do not have your talismanic object in class for the required lesson you will find it very hard to complete the task. This will be frustrating for you- and your teacher!

If your talismanic object is too valuable or precious to risk bringing it to school then you might instead bring a photograph of it.

Talk to your parents about bringing your talismanic object to school. They may prefer you to bring a photograph of it to class. If the object belongs to someone else, or you share ownership, you must seek permission before bringing it to school.

In order to safeguard your talismanic object you will need to take responsibility for it in the school environment.

This may mean leaving your object at the English Department or the School Office once you arrive at school. It may mean securing your talismanic object in your locker until your English lesson.

Follow your teachers' instructions on how to best look after your precious object.

Using your Free Writing

Once you have completed your free writing exercise you can use the material you have produced to help compose your poem.

- Read over your writing and circle or highlight any images or words that stand out or appeal to you.
- Circle or highlight any images or phrases that you feel are poetic or poem like.
- Circle or highlight any words, phrases or images that describe your talismanic object.
- Circle or highlight any phrases or words, which help, explain why your talismanic object is important to you.



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- Circle any words or phrases that you feel might make a good title for your poem.

Once you have done this copy out everything that is circled or highlighted onto a new sheet of paper.

Put a line through anything on this sheet that you feel is boring, doesn't fit in or you don't think will help you to compose your poem.

Use the material on your new sheet as the starting point or stimulus for your poem.

Guided Questions for Free Writing

For this activity you will need a pen and a piece of lined paper.

Clear off your desk so that you have nothing on it except for your pen, paper and your talismanic object.

During this task you are expected to reflect and write silently and individually.

There is no need to discuss your responses with anyone else in the room during this free writing activity.

Remember that the purpose of the poem that you will ultimately compose will be to describe your talismanic object and explain why it is special to you.

Don't try to write your poem during the free writing. Just focus on writing as much as you can and as much as you can.

Try to answer every question. If you can't answer a question then attempt the next one and come back to it later.

Free Writing Prompts

Place your object in front of you on your desk.

- Imagine you have to describe this object to a person who is blind or to someone a long distance away to whom you are speaking by telephone. Describe the appearance of your object
- Describe the colour or colours of your talismanic object in a sentence or two. List some other objects that are similarly coloured.



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- Describe the size of your object. Compare it to at least two other objects that are about the same size.
- Describe the shape of your talismanic object. Compare it to other objects of a similar shape. Make a list of these similar objects.
- Hold your talismanic object in your hand. How much do you think it would weigh? Compare it to something that would be about the same weight. Write down a list of objects that weigh the same.
- Describe the texture of your object. Run your fingers over it. Compare it to other objects that have similar texture or feel. Is it smooth or rough?
- Don't put the object in your mouth, but describe what you think it would taste like. (Really, DON'T lick or put the object in your mouth!) Identify some other things you imagine would taste the same as your object.
- Has your object changed in appearance since you first owned it? Explain how it might have changed. Briefly explain why it has changed. If it hasn't changed, then offer an explanation why it remains the same.
- How is the object like someone you know? How might it be like your mother or father, or a friend or relative? Write a line or two in which you explain how the object is like a person that you know.
- Use a simile to describe your talismanic object (A simile is a comparison between two things using like, as or than).
- Use a metaphor to describe your object (A metaphor is a direct comparison where one thing is said to be another).
- Write a sentence in which you use onomatopoeia to describe your object. Your object may not make the sound described by your use of onomatopoeia.
- Explain why you decided to bring this object to school as your talismanic object.
- Explain how you, or another person, came to own the object.
- Explain how you felt when you first held, or came to own, the object.
- How long have you owned the object? How old were you when you came to own it or know of it?
- How have you changed since you first came to own or know your talismanic object?
- Where do you keep the object? Explain why you keep it there.
- Who else knows how much you value this object? Explain how and why they share this information with you.
- What is the secret of your talismanic object?
- Who else might want to own your talismanic object? Explain why.
- Who wouldn't want to own your object? Explain why not.
- Imagine you could ask this object one question. What would this question be?



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- Imagine you had to give this object away. Who would you give it to? Why?
- Explain how you would feel if you lost the object or it was destroyed. Why do you think you would feel this way?



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Other Pre-Writing Prompts For The Talismanic Object Poem

There are a number of ways to complete this pre-writing activity. Teachers should feel free to select the writing prompts that they feel suit the needs and abilities of their students.

Students might work silent and individually through the prompts, completing them at their own pace. It is useful to read through the prompts with the class before they begin this task.

An alternate strategy is to read the prompts aloud to the task. Choose 10-15 prompts (or as many as you feel will suit your class) and read them aloud. The class completes the writing prompt silently, and then waits for the next prompt.

One advantage of reading the prompts aloud is that the students write quickly- and do not have a chance to think about the final form or content of their poem as they complete the pre-writing task.

A gradual reveal of written text on an overhead projector or data projector can work well here.

You might ask students to complete this pre-writing task as homework. This can work well where teachers feel uncomfortable about students bringing objects to class.

Other free writing prompts that consider the literary terms and devices commonly used in the NSW School Certificate English-literacy test are available as a free download from The Red Room Company website.



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What is The Red Room Company?

The Red Room Company is a not-for-profit organization based in Sydney, Australia. We create, promote and publish new poetry by Australian writers, in unusual ways.

Through a range of forms such as radio, podcast, live performance and collaboration with artists and designers, we broaden the public's definition of and experience with high quality Australian poetry.

Our projects focus on commissioning new work and developing imaginative contexts in which this poetry can be creatively and critically explored. We focus on supporting the work of young and emerging writers through individual projects, and are increasingly interested in engaging with regional and remote Australian voices.



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What is the Papercuts national poetry education program?

Papercuts is The Red Room Company's national poetry education program. It is the only national poetry education program in Australia.

Participants in our program are given the opportunity to compose and publish their own poetry as they explore activities and resources from flexible education kits based on previous Red Room Company public poetry projects.

These include The Cabinet of Lost and Found, Toilet Doors and Sea Things.

Papercuts focuses on students in secondary schools but has expanded to include learners in a diverse range of contexts.

Central to the Papercuts experience is providing learners and educators with meaningful contact with a living and breathing Australian poet. Each poet visits the participating school or institution for a series of up to three workshops.

The Red Room Company is committed to providing creative and employment opportunities for poets and so each Papercuts poet is commissioned to compose a poem especially for their allocated school or institution.

Learners and educators from all states and territories and across educational sectors have experienced the flexibility of the Papercuts program.

We are proud to have worked in inner city and regional and rural areas, with community organizations, adult learners, gifted and talented and extension groups, special needs classes and in single sex and co-educational settings.

If you want to know more about the Papercuts national poetry education program then you can contact Tony Britten, our Education Director.



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Contact Details

If you would like to discuss any aspect of *The Poetry Object* please contact:

NSW Public Schools (Sydney Region)

Michele Mawer (Sydney Region 7-12 Literacy Consultant)

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Email: Michele.mawer@det.nsw.edu.au

The Red Room Company

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You can read more about The Red Room Company and the Papercuts Education program at the links below:

<http://redroomcompany.org>

<http://redroomcompany.org/education>

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