



## **Darwin Middle School, 2014**

### ***The Disappearing* with poet Sandra Thibodeaux**

As part of a special pilot program supported by the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, Sandra Thibodeaux joined The Red Room company to present a series of intensive poetry workshops to Year 9 students from Darwin Middle School. Sandra guided the students to create and publish their own poems inspired by themes of disappearing, transformation and change.

Red Room Poetry Education inspires students and teachers to create, perform and publish poetry.

We enliven experiences with poetry by bringing contemporary poets into classrooms across Australia to run intensive writing workshops that awaken imaginations, support creative opportunities and curriculum outcomes.

**13 steps  
by Remi G.**

13 steps to nowhere  
where a life ends  
to replenish another  
where holes in the walls  
ooze memories

13 steps to nowhere  
where life splashes  
playing with fire  
where freedom roams  
heedless of foreboding

13 steps to nowhere  
where flowers bloom  
to passers by  
where life flourishes  
in the face of death

13 steps to nowhere  
where students run  
hiding from the future  
as confetti lightens  
the dark of day

13 steps to the future  
and the future is here

**Lifeless  
by Kitty N.**

A blood-crusted towel rubs her,  
Friction heats her steel body  
As she eyes the animal fur  
From a distance, on her hook.

A giant hand grips her  
Holding her upside-down  
She sees him, full of life  
Along with its fearful frown

A swing, a whoosh, a force  
A force greater than gravity  
Only from the meaty hands  
Of a cruel being with cavities

A heavy impact, a fluffy world  
Then the warmth engulfs her gleaming body  
Red blinds her vision  
In the distance, a muffled squeal

The red turns blue, hot to cold  
Beating of its heart stops abruptly  
As she exits the world of red  
Back into the atmosphere of the Tank

He's lifeless.

**The Tank  
by Emily O.**

Life in a place of death  
What was once a horror scene,  
Dripping with blood  
And smelling of decay  
Is now a peaceful place  
Where children study  
Within the walls  
Learning about what used to be

**The Tank  
by Anya R.**

Where animals were slaughtered  
Flesh rotted, and blood would pour  
A large building stood  
Holding death within it

Red as a rose, the floor became  
After heartless workers  
Ripped life apart  
Destroyed helpless souls

After years passed  
And changes were made  
Almost everything was forgotten  
About the animals that once laid

The old demolishing walls  
Repaired by cement  
No longer hold the animals  
It used to hold within

A tree rips through the walls  
Desperately trying to bring back the life  
Where death once laid

Birds sing by the tranquil pond  
Covering the sound of the animals crying  
Life is being replaced

**The Tank  
by Juliette P.**

Blood dribbles down my iron walls,  
Animals are slaughtered,  
As those on the front are soon to be  
Carnage stains me; shrieks make me tremble  
But still I stand tall

The last bullet sounds,  
And blood is drowned by water,  
Forgotten past, hopeful future,  
Laughter splashes corrugated iron

My stomach bustles with students  
Life in a place of death  
Firsts, lasts and happy times,  
The school has since forgot

New life grows where old life dies  
The echoes of screams, masked by laughter,  
A new bud blooms  
As we forgive, forget.

**The Tank  
by Gabrielle S.**

The animals hang aligned,  
And create a stench of decay and death.  
The blood haunts the walls,  
And horrors seep through  
the fractures in the brick.

The spirits of the animals,  
Now inhabit pools of laughter.  
The children climb the ladders,  
Unaware of the previous slaughter.

The students who are now learning,  
Within the walls of recollection,  
Study the remnants  
Of a past that was disappearing.

**The Tank  
by Teuwira**

Once housing animals,  
Awaiting a cruel demise.  
Slaughtered to feed hungry soldiers,  
Sliced open, dripping red.

Once holding water,  
A deep dark abyss,  
And on hot and humid days,  
A place where children play.  
Once blood now runs water.

Currently, Nature reclaims the land.  
Vines intertwine with steel.  
Trees topple brick.  
Grass covers cement.  
Metal rusts away  
Animals frolic where animals once died.

**Autopsy  
(Group Poem)**

*Based on an ABC TV report of Cyclone Tracy*

'Twas the night before Christmas.  
Restless children bundled in sheets  
awaited unknown surprises,  
slept through a rising shriek  
as the clock struck midnight.

Midnight:

dreams lost in chaos, darkness beckons,  
engulfing the bones of broken homes,  
skeletons ripped of flesh.  
No longer fit to house a home.  
Frames no longer ...

Frames that no longer house souls  
swallowed by an abyss. Metal carcasses strewn  
in a street autopsy. Roads cracked  
like the lips of the elderly.  
The toys of neighbourhood boys  
play with ghosts. Life left behind.

Life left behind,  
drenched in tears of the broken,  
abandoned in Dystopia.  
A town in ruins,  
an act of drunken disaster,  
childhoods stolen.

Stolen by the wind,  
houses stripped of the life inside,  
shattered souls leak from framed eyes.  
Origami unraveling.  
Like loved ones in mourning,  
sheets of iron embrace lifeless trees.

Trees defeated,  
hope drips from ceilings,  
drip drop.  
Clouds empty.  
A town void of substance,  
yet, in the sunlight,  
green grass triumphs.



### **Poet Bio**

Sandra Thibodeaux is a Darwin playwright and poet. She has written nine plays, six of which have been staged as part of the Darwin Fringe Festival. Other plays have featured in the Darwin Festival and the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival. Sandra has published two volumes of poetry, and her writing has been featured in national and international journals. Sandra's work has been broadcast on ABC Radio (Northern Territory), Radio National's Poetica and Radio National's The Deep End. Living in Darwin, she speaks from a context that is, as she perceives it, markedly Indigenous and South-East Asian. Her poetry also articulates a feminist understanding of the world. Sandra also writes songs and her band, Ben Her, has released its debut CD, Spartacus.

### **About Us**

The Red Room Company creates unusual and useful poetry projects that transform expectations of, and experiences with, poetry. We aspire to make poetry accessible to all, especially those who face the greatest barriers to creative opportunities.