

# The Red Room Company Quarterly

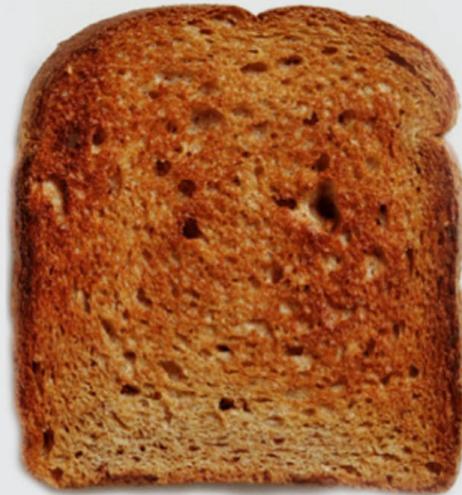


## Excerpt from 'Canberra Poem'

by Fiona Wright,  
for Wanniasa High School, Papercuts 2010

In your crisp city, you buy a mug of mulled wine  
and a fresh-squeezed orange juice at ten on Sunday,  
and a Shetland pony sits fat beneath gloved children.  
The lake wears a border of cold cyclists,  
and police in steel-blue overalls  
walk labradors sleek as fish  
on neon leashes.  
The water seems riveted together,  
and the grey buildings still remember  
the dioramas they were modeled on.

In this staticky city, the air makes my skin  
feel like toast.



## POEMS in the PAPER

Os

can be ovals

this was something d  
known n forgotten

goes on blue dries  
on shoes n dance

blobs just for one day

By Nick Whittock

This poem is one of our current selections for the Sun-Herald. Originally a side-project, the Sun-Herald has grown to become a real focus for The Red Room Company, since it is allowing us to get great quality and innovative poetry out to a huge audience. It allows us to showcase young writers and provoke readers to think about what they expect from poetry.

Nick Whittock's strange and extraordinary 'cricket poems' challenge people to read differently; to read points of punctuation as dense units of meaning. In Whittock's poetry, not only is the vernacular of cricket and popular culture made concrete, but it is sifted through the net of his own experimental poetics.

The results are fascinating. Is cricket a way of understanding poetry and the world? Or are poetry and the world merely the best way to fully understand cricket? These are the strange questions we've been able to pose to this audience on a Sunday morning.

We're currently talking to other newspapers around the country in the hope of establishing similar relationships.

### THE RED ROOM COMPANY IS CALLING ON POETS FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA TO SUBMIT POEMS FOR PUBLICATION IN THE SUN-HERALD 'EXTRA' SECTION.

This new series of poems will have a focus on younger and emerging writers trying to make a name for themselves as poets. We want all styles of poetry, so that readers can get a taste of the full palate of current Australian poetry. The only limitation is space. Please send all submissions as an attachment to [text@redroomcompany.org](mailto:text@redroomcompany.org), with 'Sun Herald Extra Submission' in the subject header.

Maximum two submissions per poet, and please, remember the size constraints when choosing work (20 lines is about the max).





*We began by each writing a poem from the perspective of an animal of our choosing... We then broke into pairs, and I asked the students to combine both of their poems to create a new poem, and therefore a new creature. The resulting poems were both disturbing and hauntingly beautiful. Many spoke of mutation and the aftereffects of the imposition of human agency on other entities.*

*The creatures that arose from their collective imagination were almost entirely "alone in the world," left behind to suffer the consequences of genetic mutations that often left them unable to navigate their environment, such as the "crocbird" whose feathers and scales rendered her unable to fly or slither, and the flying leopard, who circles, endlessly "mutated," "searching for an abandoned site." I hope that the poems that comprise this tragic menagerie will be included in the Cabinet, for they truly are both lost and found.*

– Lindsay Tuggle on working with Brisbane Water.

In Term 2 of 2010 *Papercuts* went to new schools, including our first ever program in Queensland. Students from Davidson High School, Wanniasa High School, West Moreton Anglican College, Killara High School, and Brisbane Water Secondary College participated in poetry workshops with a whole range of Red Room Company poets. The feedback we've received has been phenomenal, and is a tribute to the creative passion of our poets as well as a validation of our belief in the power of poetry.

In the upcoming terms, schools from Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales will be jumping into the creative process with us. We're currently developing a new education kit aimed at younger students based around the *Sea Things* project. Three Sydney-based schools will also be collaborating on a fantastic project in Term 4.

Students from Macquarie Fields High professionally recorded their creative efforts with the help of Elliott Wheeler and Turning Studios. Thanks to Imelda Judge from Macquarie Fields High for her continued and enthusiastic support of *Papercuts* and The Red Room in general.

*Poems to Share* and an education workshop for teachers were presented by The Red Room Company at the English Teachers' Association of QLD in August. The Conference resulted in the sale of many *Poems to Share* boxes and Expressions of Interest from QLD, for our 2011 program. The workshops will also feature at the ETA of NSW Conference in October.

REGISTER FOR

# POETRY SOIRÉE

WEDNESDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER, 6PM  
NSW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Poetry returns to Parliament House in Sydney on Wednesday 22nd September at 6PM. Pollies and guest poets Robert Adamson and Ivy Ireland will read their own and favourite poems.

We invite poets and members of the public to register and read their works.

**To register to read please contact**  
**[polly.lawton@judge.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:polly.lawton@judge.minister.nsw.gov.au)**  
**or phone 02 9228 4285**

This event is hosted by the Honorable Virginia Judge, Minister for Fair Trading and Minister for the Arts, as well as The Week Magazine. Emceed by Johanna Featherstone.

# unlocked

will explore the transformative powers of poetry and literacy by running a series of workshops in Dyllwinia and John Morony Correctional Centres. Supported by the Thyne Reid Foundation we are working with Education Consultant Tony Britten and featured poets Gareth Jenkins and Lindsay Tuggle, along with Corrective Services teaching staff, to develop a learning unit that will suit the needs of students in the two Centres. In the coming weeks The Red Room Company's Artistic Director, Johanna Featherstone, will be visiting the centres in order to drum up interest amongst both staff and inmates. We will also be selecting the last of the guest poets, who will add variety to the poetic experience of the students. The project also has an audiovisual component. There remains much work to do, but *Unlocked* promises to be a very special Red Room Company project, and Corrective Services has already expressed interest in making it ongoing.

By realising projects like *Unlocked* we make a strong claim for the value of poetry and the arts for the wider community; that poetry is not a frivolous pastime for people with spare time, but a social investment. Indeed it is the most disadvantaged people who have the most to gain, and often the most to offer. Poetry develops skills, our sense of self, and helps us to relate to our peers and our world.

With *Unlocked*, we hope to provide a range of tangible examples of this social value, both on the page and in radio and video pieces.

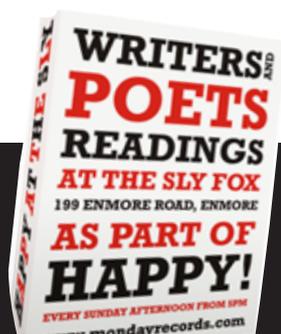
## Clubs & Socs

*Clubs & Socs* is an upcoming project that will commence in 2011 following *Unlocked*. It involves pairing emerging and experimental poets with different clubs and societies from across the country to create collaborative works of poetry.

If you're a member of a club or society, and think your group might be interested in this exciting project, please get in touch with Joel, at [text@redroomcompany.org](mailto:text@redroomcompany.org).

## Pecha Kucha

*Pecha Kucha* started in Japan bringing designers together to talk about their craft. It has floated south to Sydney and expanded along the way. Johanna was invited to speak as part of Sydney Design 2010. Jo showed slides and provided a visual-verbal tour inside The Red Room Company. *Pecha Kucha* was held at the Ivy Bar on Tuesday 10th August.



## Happy Sundays

Friends of the Red Room Monday Records are starting up a new performance night at the Sly Fox in Enmore, starting Sunday 5th September. The Happy gigs will include bands, DJs and poetry readings. The readings will happen before the bands and between sets. If you're interested in reading your work, contact Anna Ballantine via email. Otherwise, we hope to see you there on a Sunday afternoon.

## Why We Love Books

*Why We Love Books* was a panel discussion, featuring The Red Room Company, about the tactility of books. Hosted by Boccalatte and part of 2010 Sydney Design the event was a sell-out, and took place in a salubrious Surry Hills wine bar called Berta.

Other speakers included book publishers, designers and bookmakers.



## Poems To Share

If you were mad enough to miss the *Poems to Share* event at The 2010 Sydney Writers' Festival, films of the poets' performances are now available online (with thanks to Andrew Garrick and Turning Studios). Over 250 people attended the celebration of The Red Room's creative archive and partnership with Corban and Blair in the production of the *Poems to Share* box sets.

Along with the films, our online gallery contains photographs and poems specially penned by the audience members. Special thanks to the volunteers who helped out on the night, as well as Onur Karaozbek for the images.





## Patron Observations

In the lead-up to the *Carved Trees* exhibition at The State Library in 2011, we asked our Patron, Mr John Fairfax AO to share his experience of recently visited landscapes. Here is an excerpt:

*But leaves never leave you entirely. New growth provides the chemistry that allows me to breathe and smell your healing oil, so pungent in its purity. Your bark is rough like a shield protecting an inner soul. It looks menacing in contrast to the Ribbon Gum (Eucalyptus Viminalis) nearby, its trunk shining a semblance of light innocence as though it is your new-born child. Its soft peeling bark falls like tears in a cemetery. Insects have scribbled and tattooed an ancient scroll of remembrance upon this infant trunk, their meaning patterned and obscure and never to be revealed except perhaps by the mystic imagination of an earlier generation.*

## Red Roaming at the Struga Poetry Evenings

For 10 days in August I roamed the Macedonian hills and streets with poets from around the world for the Struga Poetry Festival. I was invited by the Festival to read from my forthcoming publication with Vagabond Press and deliver a talk on The Red Room Company with a focus on our approach to New Media. Oddly, I was the only one who used any technology during the talk. More odd was the translation of only English speakers into Macedonian so my fellow poets delivered their talks in their mother tongue and ultimately, only to themselves. The poets were humbling to read alongside and the adventure has enriched both my work as a poet and my ability to make our poetry projects more meaningful and relevant to the wide world and multitude of languages we operate in.



**You are invited to the launch of *Felt*, a chapbook of Johanna's poetry, published by Vagabond Press. The collection launches at Gleebooks on Saturday September 25th at 4PM. (RSVP +61 2 9660 2333).**

## The Library Series

We are delighted to announce that The City of Sydney will be supporting a new project featuring poems being displayed in a selection of City Of Sydney libraries in 2011. It also involves a series of workshops that utilise the unique collections at each library. The project culminates in a digital exhibition of poetry, composed during the project workshops, at the Kings Cross Library, NSW.



## SUPPORT THE RED ROOM COMPANY

If you would like to chat with me personally about how you can support our organization, please call (02) 9319 5090 or email [johanna@redroomcompany.org](mailto:johanna@redroomcompany.org)