



Illawarra Sports High School, 2014 *Toilet Doors Poetry* with poet Zohab Zee Khan

Australian spoken word poet Zohab Zee Khan worked with students from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 at Illawarra Sports High School in March. As well as hearing Zohab perform his poetry, students created a series of guerilla poems inspired by the *Toilet Doors* learning resource. Students wrote poems on rainy windows and worked with Zohab to record their poems as part of a QR code poem poster activity.

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.

Red Room Poetry Education at Illawarra Sports High School, 2014
redroomcompany.org/education/



**Where stars come alight
by Bethany**

I want to go for a walk
in the middle of the night
far away from the city
where the stars come alight.
It will be so quiet
I will hear my heart beat
Just to sit there for a while
No distractions
No interruptions
To feel free
To feel like a bird
Soaring through the sky
I will be able to hear myself think
Let my thoughts come alive
No pressure
No worries
I want to go for a walk
in the middle of the night
far away from the city
where the stars come alight.

**Why?
by Ayah S.**

Why is life like a popularity contest?
Why do we always have to protest?
Why are we always judging a book by its cover?
Why aren't we bonding together like a daughter and a mother?
Is this how life's going to be from now on.
Or are we going to change and move on.
Life is short and it is worth living in happiness.
We shouldn't be living like one person is the princess.
We have a right in this world.
But it is like one big hurl.
Why can't we get along
Instead of doing the wrong.
Why why why this is the one and only
Word on my mind.

**Alone
by Alexia**

I sit there all alone wondering if I should go home
These thoughts in my head are driving me crazy
I don't know what to do because I'm becoming lazy
Everyone around me is becoming dazy
I just hope I don't go crazy
All these people telling me to die, should I listen or just cry?
I don't know how I feel, I'm trying to believe it's not real
but reality kicks in and changes the deal.
Life is hard and we all know it some of us
Don't want to show it!

**Fire cannot
by Jaime S.**

fire cannot eliminate fire
just as war cannot either
to stand for change
we don't need a leader
as a person of society
don't depend on others
as change begins with you
not just your brothers
to discriminate is to hate
against religion or colour
it doesn't matter
we all come from the same mother
the judgement of one
who may be like you
but you'll never know
because you're afraid to try to
difference of appearance
holding people apart
constrained from another
religion held in the heart
as we go on
we realise together
that working as one, will
make it better

**Freedom?
by Sidney**

Is freedom in my head
or is it in my heart?
Do I need freedom?
Is freedom just another
word or is it meant
to mean something?
You need to change
your own destiny.
Don't let someone choose
It for you.
Freedom is the key!
Or is it?
You will only get one
opportunity to be free
so pick it up and run.
Run far and wide.
Is freedom going to
just be there.
No, fight for it.
Fight harder than anything
you ever have fought for.
Is it in your head or in
my heart ?
Neither.
I am freedom and
so are you.

**My family
by Thomeissa**

The thing that's most important to me
would have to be my family
they stick by me through thick and thin
even if I do so sin.
Mum, she'll do anything for me even hop
and even buy me new high tops.
My dad he's not a morning guy
but if I need him he will try.
My oldest brother Umbarra, the brat,
will come to help me wherever he's at.
My little sisters, the twins, I might say
are spoilt and cheeky but not in a good way.
My four-year-old brother is sensitive and quiet
but if you mess with his Xbox he'll start a riot.
My youngest brother, my little Ezzakai
is loud and noisy but sweet as pie.
My oldest sibling and sister as such
lives down in Sydney so I don't see her much.
Last but not least my youngest sibling and sister
who's one
copies her older brothers and likes to have fun.

**My sister
by Lauren**

This is about my little sister,
her name is Olivia, she is turning three soon.
Olivia isn't like other kids, she has a disease,
this specific disease effects her a lot.
The disease's name is Cystic Fibrosis,
it effects the organs in her stomach,
she has to take medicine before she eats
to try and make sure that she doesn't get sick.
If you are sick, you can't be around her
As her body can't fight off sickness.
If she catches a cold she may go to hospital.
She is limited in where she can go and who she
can see.
There is no known cure for Cystic Fibrosis
but my sister has been lucky.
She is a fighter and not like most with her dis-
ease,
She hasn't been majorly sick and we're grateful
for that.
Cystic Fibrosis shortens the life of many,
but there are a lucky few that live past 40.
We pray and hope that one day it will be
different and that a cure will be found,
we are closer everyday
but it still seems that we are
so far away.

**If I were
by Brooke**

If I were a balloon I would fly high. If I were a soccer ball I would try and reach the goal. If I were a computer I would type away the bad things in life. If I were a candle I would never burn out. If I were a knife I wouldn't stab anyone in the back. If I were a phone I would never die. If I were water I would never run out. If I were a key I would never unlock the bad side of the world. If I were a door I would never be dark. If I were the sky I would never be gray. But I'm not any of those I am me and that who I'm proud to be.

**Erasure poem
Anon**

It sounds so simple
in lost time
But things keep going
Look at the clock

**My sister and I
by Lochlyn**

My sister and I
My sister and I, we share a special bond
My sister and I, we never fight
My sister and I, we trust each other forever.
My sister and I, we sometimes get irritated although it's our dad's fault.
My sister and I, we share...sometimes
My sister and I, hardly saw each other 'til last year, she moved in with me and my dad.
People call my sister and I weird because we never fight.
My sister and I, we share a special bond.

**Erasure poem
by Anonymous**

Without tears
I was penniless
The shadows under the eyes
Studied so
no door will be closed
I knew this man
He will resign
unless
something is done.

**Our own enemy
by Batool**

Why are we acting like our own enemy?
Why are we throwing bombs and grenades?
Why are we hiding behind barricades?
Why can't we accept the fact
When we're sitting here under attack?
Why can't we act like a peaceful dove?
Why are our expectations so high
like somehow we're meant to just fly?
Why are we creating enemies and wars?
Why are innocent people dead on floors?
Why are we hating
When we should be appreciating?
Why? Why is the question we should be answering ourselves
instead of keeping everything inside like a closed book on a shelf.
So next time ask why
instead of believing we're all here to die.

**Erasure poem
Anon**

Real friend
come along to the poet's grave with us
poet's grave
closing-time
to tell the story
to take steps.

**As I ride
by Rebar**

As I ride the wave
I feel like I am on a thrilling adventure
Yet on the otherhand I feel peacefully relaxed
As time passes the water changes
And so do my emotions
When I am riding the barrel
I look towards the opening
And as I shoot out I feel like I am on top of
the moon
But to bodyboard you will have to eventually
wipeout
And that is the time that fear comes in
However it is quite a fun place
The force, the energy the power
It all takes control of you
And you are like a needle in a haystack.

**Erasure poem
Anon**

A small child
running through the garden
was surprised to see
a band of gipsies who
hoped to offer a show.
This incident
confused the human.
I tell you
So that you may understand.

**Life's questions
by Gabi**

Why does the garden grow?
Why does the wind blow?
What makes the sun shine?
Why do we write in straight lines?
When will the world end, if ever?
Why do birds have beautiful feathers?
When does night actually start?
Why do we worry, is it because of our heat?
Who decided we'd eat cows?
When did we start calling a jumper a blouse?
How come people think school is hard?
Why don't we all have a yard?
Why is the grass green not red?
Why do we put tools in a shed?
Why do we grow then stop?
When is the age when you stop sleeping in
a cot?
Tell me if you care.
Why aren't I a dancer?
Why don't my questions have an answer?
Why? What? When? Who? Where?

**The boat
by Alexandar P.**

I sat in the boat with a heavy flow drowning me
I was sad, depressed and soaked myself in red
The powerful thing hit in an instance, hard and slow
All my mind as focusing on was the lose of my young
The death penalty was terrifying and huge
He didn't realise how hard he hit until he looked
Nineteen Sixty Two with two children and a shed was
all we had along
With a piece of bamboo and tin
I once was an ocean to my kids, now what has
happened, I've started to run
dry.
I look left and all I see are happy kids
I look right and no words can describe
All I could think of was 'why me' 'why us' 'why now'
We travelled for days on end sometimes months if it
got that bad
Banks were flooding and so were we in a way
Nothing is better than what has happened
Not needing to ask for money and permission was only
the start
We couldn't be more blessed
We thank god for everything that has happened even
though we lost
someone

**Trapped
Anon**

Feeling trapped
Trapped behind the pressure to be perfect
Striving for perfection
Having to be good enough
Willing to play rough
Wanting to make everyone proud
Having to be proud
What about me?
What I want for me?
I want to spread my wings and fly after my dream.
My dream that may seem unrealistic to the
common mind.

Taleya

I like to eat food
Some people think I'm a dude.
For some reason I'm not fat yet.
Did you know that I'm a teacher's pet?
I also like to travel the world
I've been to New York, Vietnam and Korea.
My family is Vietnamese and so am I, obviously.
I wish that I lived in New York because it's very
famous, truly.
I have a little brother who had his lungs collapsed.
The news nearly gave me a heart attack.
For these past years I've been mean to him
With a jerk called Tim.
My sister has a crush on him but he has a girlfriend
called Kim.
Some people believed that she was raised in a bin.

**Calm air
by Melanie**

The trickle of water on the riverbed stone
runs next to the bank, sand dry as a bone.
The wind whistles up high in the tall gum trees
and flowers open their petals in welcome of
bees.
You hear bird chirping in the cool, calm air
your eyes are filled with delight to see this sight
the mountain wood so peaceful and fair.
The sky is so clear, the sun shining bright
what a wonderful sleep you will have this night.
The wildlife around you is cautious but calm
as a glorious grey moth lands right in your palm.
Laying back on the grass all soft and green
you marvel over the sights you have seen
now you understand the beautiful things
that the wilderness offers and nature brings.
Its time to go home but you don't want to.
So you stay a while to "tie your shoe"
you get home late and your supper is cold
so you look up at the moon, wonderful and bold
you will wake up tomorrow and start again
but sleep now in peace and comfort 'til then.

**I used to
by Rebecca**

When I walk past you with my head
in shame because I know I know I'm the one
to blame.
Its making me insane knowing
I caused us pain.
I used to smile I used to sleep but
now you never hear a peep. Loosing
you caused me grief because you were
the one that cheat. You're my love
you're my life but because I lost
you I picked up the knife and
now when I walk past you
all you see are my bandaged
wrists and bruised thighs not
knowing why. You're on my mind
all the time. You see what's on
the outside but not the inside
the scars from the past proving that
it does exist, that you are my life.

**Erasure poem
Anon**

A small child
running through the garden
was surprised to see
a band of gipsies who
hoped to offer a show.
This incident
confused the human.
I tell you

Rain
by Jaime W.

I sat at my window and watch the rain,
I watched as it washed out the world.
Along with my problems and dramas
somehow, it seemed to make everything calm.
The pitter-patter of the rain
turned into sounds like gunshots
as it fell on my tin roof.
But the sound was comforting
like a protective blanket,
wrapped around my body,
tight and safe.
The sound reminded me of when I was younger
back then, I was scared,
especially of thunder,
and the flash of the lightening,
but now I see that the rain
seems to make everything clearer
so there I still sit at my window
and continue to watch the rain
as it washes out the world.

More
by Melissa K.

She is part of the meadow, blends
in with its purity, colour and grace.
she sat on top of the hill, the powerful
breeze showing its face, the red roses
covered the grass for miles as if
it was fate. Her pen pressed softly on
the paper, producing lines of colour and
rhythm throughout, reminded her about
the times of her life living in another
country. Thailand it was, so different, the contrast
vibe and place was all so colourful, it was too great.
All gone to soon as the wave
Took its course. No place to run, hide
No place at all. Families rebuilt
Some alone, some together,
left with nothing, expected to fit
in somewhere else. England she landed
with no place to go. It was colder
there, she had never seen snow.
Three years had passed in the blink
of an eye, still every morning waking
up with a beautiful sight. The land full
of red roses was her getaway and reminder
of what her life had been before. Red, the
colour of blood. Sadness and grief was no more.
That was the colour of love and much much more.

Disney Land
by Tammy

On a plane to America, O fun, O fun it will be
Seeing all the characters at Disneyland, what a pleasure
it will be.
Also all the rides there that I may just get on
All the good smelling food that will keep your appetite up
Sitting on the path of the main street, watching the
parade go by
Seeing it with my eyes, it must be a dream
Standing at the castle, I wonder what's inside
Shaking hands with Mickey and Minnie, and all their
wonderful friends.
No in the end, watching fireworks spark high
On a plane to America, O fun, O fun it will be
Seeing all the characters at Disneyland, what a pleasure
it will be.

Flowers
Anon

He stood ready
heart beating heavy
willing to risk everything
just to show something
wanting to be heard
by the wandering herd
but all he were flowers
that didn't have any real powers

China
by Caitlin

I got on a plane to go to China
The flight no. is 2549.
The plane was delayed so I had to wait.
I waited for 20 minutes.
It took more than a couple of hours.
I had enough time to relax and sleep when I was on
the plane.
We got off and it was nighttime.
I went to my hotel and checked in
because I was tired.
My room was big, I soon fell asleep
but I needed some feed.
So I went to get food
but by the end my stomach was fed.
I went back to bed
I didn't wake up 'til 10am.
I then got breakfast
but seemed to be full again.
I went to the pool
then I swam but there was a kid and he was a fool.
I went back to my room
and was packed to go home.
When the day came I got to the airport
the plane was the same.
I got home and just relaxed.

Erasure poem
Anon

It sounds so simple
in lost time
But things keep going
Look at the clock

I wish
Anon

Sitting next to the ocean
The opposite of red
with its calmest of motion
I grab my bag and finally decide to go
go to the show, Tammy's favourite show
The show is based on Japanese plays
With plates at the end QA's
I watch the show with complete intrigue
There's 9 plates, 8 people, 3 swords
And animals 15
The door to my heart opened as if I were a house ready
take from the play the beautiful
spouse.
I leave the show see
a lot of graffiti.
But there was one piece
of art that did really intrigue me.
It's a political statement
one about peace.
It's a statement about
not being tied to a leash.
The only colour here is what
shows some freedom
and it isn't like usual the
freedom isn't underneath him,
I wish I could see him
I wish I could meet him
I wish I could be him
because the man in this
art seems like he's
seen it all
and he wouldn't be afraid

To lose it all.
So carry on in my
life
but it has been changed
so much by this little scrap of feeling cut
off with a small knife.

Poet Bio

Zohab Zee Khan is nomadic spoken word artist, originally hailing from Wagga Wagga NSW. He is the founding director of Zee Poetics, an organisation that aims to inspire a new generation of poets through performance based workshops. Zohab won the APS NSW Slam in 2012.



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.

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