



Before the fire of money

burned my happiness

~ Conor, Year 6, Poetry Object

Poetic matter is often found in unlikely places. From prisons to truck cabins, disappearing towns and mangrove swamps The Red Room Company has never shied away from unearthing poetry and poets in unexpected and contested spaces.

There are as many definitions of poetry as there are poets and readers of poems. To limit the form to traditional pages, stages and a small circle of voices not only reduces its potential, it lacks imagination intrinsic to poetry's bones.

While The Red Room Company's approach to poetic projects has been deemed too adventurous for some, the aim of broadening creative and critical contexts for poetry has remained vital since the Company's inception in 2003. Punching through paradox, this founding curiosity and desire to stretch poetic boundaries has seen us grow to become the preeminent organisation for commissioning contemporary Australian poetry.

Reflecting the diversity of Australian voices, The Red Room Company's projects embrace all styles of poetry – page, performance, musical, visual and experimental. Whether working with pigeon fanciers or plant-lovers we promote the form across a range of languages and mediums including radio, public installation, digital platforms and learning programs.

In the 13 years since inception our projects have engaged close to 1000 poets. These include illustrious figures such as David Malouf, Pam Brown, Lionel Fogarty, Judith Rodriguez and Robert Adamson. We've also supported first commissions and publication opportunities for emerging poets Eileen Chong and Fiona Wright, as well as over 15,000 students like Conor in classrooms across the country.

Now under the Artistic Direction of Dr. Tamryn Bennett, The Red Room Company continues to thrive by collaboratively pushing perspectives of what, where and how poetry can be created and shared. Company Founder, Johanna Featherstone, continues to work closely with The Red Room team as a Board Member and poet within our learning programs.

This year our poetic programs, *New Shoots*, *Unlocked*, *The Disappearing*, *Yala Gari* and *Poetry Object* see us working with a spectrum of partners and poets including Mark Tredinnick, Lorna Munro, Jill Jones, Chloe Wilson, Ellen Van Neerven and Candy Royalle to name too few. These projects not only encourage cultivation and engagement with new poems, they make poetry visible, meaningful and viable through everyday encounters in botanic gardens, seed banks and parks, as well as correctional centres, classrooms, train carriages and communities.

Contrary to tiresome opinions proclaiming the death of poetry, The Red Room Company chooses to invent, inspire and investigate new possibilities for poetry in all its forms. Having secured multi-year funding from the Australia Council in the current climate of funding cuts, we are committed to ensuring relevant poetic opportunities for a wide net of creators and audiences now and into the future. We invite you to join us for the ride.

Yours in poetry,

The Red Room Company

**POETRY IN
UNUSUAL
AND USEFUL
WAYS**

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