

Red  
Room  
Poetry

BUNDANON TRUST

# Bundanon Workshop

with Dapto High School

## Red Room Poetry

Red Room Poetry 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 dynamic writing workshops that awaken imaginations and support creative opportunities.

## Bundanon Trust Workshop

From August 14-16 2017 Ali Cobby Eckerman led intensive poetic learning workshops at Bundanon Trust with 66 YWCA Nowra, Bomaderry High School and Dapto High School students in years 9-10. The workshops focused on reconnecting to the earth and exploring our emotions.

With Ali's guidance, students wrote independently amid eucalypts and crafted a collaborative poem by purposefully selecting one word from their independent writing. Students then sculpted that word from wire and experimented with artistic recordings of these poems using a range of mediums.



## Ali Cobby Eckerman

Ali Cobby Eckerman's first collection '*little bit long time*' was written in the desert and launched her literary career in 2009. Her works have been published in various languages, and she has travelled widely to showcase Aboriginal poetry overseas. In 2013 Ali toured Ireland as the Australian Poetry Ambassador and won the Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry and Book Of The Year (NSW) for '*Ruby Moonlight*', a massacre verse novel. In 2014 Ali was the inaugural recipient of the Tungkunungka Pintyanthi Fellowship at Adelaide Writers Week, and the first Aboriginal Australian writer to attend the International Writing Program at University of Iowa. Her memoir '*Too Afraid To Cry*' was launched in New Delhi India in 2015, on her way to Jaipur Literature Festival. In 2016 Ali presented a Keynote at the Active Aesthetics conference in Berkeley California. In 2017 Ali received a Windham-Campbell Award from Yale University. She was also awarded the Red Room Poetry Fellowship this year.



## The High

*By Toby*

The mountainous road travelled  
to reach the point that seems unreachable,  
that might in fact be desirable

But once it is reached  
you can feel the swift wind  
where you can breathe the air in

Once you feel this energy high  
the Earth can give you a vibrant life

It gives you a world  
that has peace and harmony

The nature speaks to us like  
a whisper in a world full of yelling

But if we can hold onto it  
we can create an ambience for it to talk

We will reach the high

## An Inhumane Humanity

*By Caycee*

The whisperings of the wind  
stir old tales  
those of trees  
and hummingbird wails

The tunes they sing  
diminish all presence  
to wipe the slate clear  
of humanity's call

Rough, coarse, scarred with memories  
the body tells a story like no other

Together they sway and liven the air  
together they create the whisperings of the  
wind

Don't look; but listen

To purify  
to cleanse  
to isolate and serenade

The whisperings of nothingness  
yet as powerful as stone  
once listened to  
will never leave alone

To make  
To break

Not to be seen;  
but to be heard

## Tree Song

*By Melanie*

The hushed winds sigh – chorusing a love song

Lilting voices

Grey twig snaps; a bush conversation  
the earth breathes

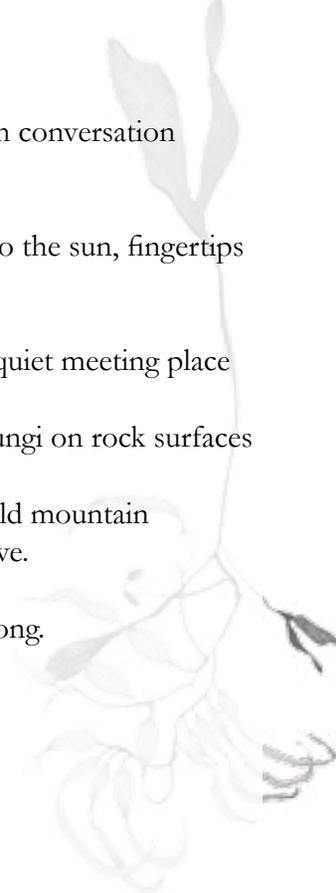
Trees raise their arms to the sun, fingertips  
brushing the sky

Old spirits gather in a quiet meeting place

Paths mapped out in fungi on rock surfaces

A giant lays under an old mountain  
his belly forming a curve.

He listens to the tree song.



### **A Little Bird**

*By Kaitlin M*

Up high in the trees sits a little bird's nest  
it lays with its head curled under its wing as it rests

the wind hits harshly against the little bird's feathers  
but it is cold and sad for the nest is its tether

the little bird dreams only of flying away  
but for now it must lay in its nest feeling betrayed

another bird flies by and it starts to cry  
for its mother is gone and it shall never learn to fly

### **Untitled**

*By Isabelle*

The crunching of dead leaves  
crush under the weight of my body  
as the gushing winds of winter  
leave me pining for warmth

there I lay.

with the piercing air tormenting me  
through the thin fabric of my clothes

a beam of light fights its way  
through endless amounts of leaves  
like the ground was a magnet

I close my eyes.

the heavy breeze reminds me of the ocean  
messing up my hair  
bringing tears to my eyes

### **This is My Country**

*By Kaitlin*

The trees were singing  
the wind was whistling

The birds chatter  
the leaves flutter

The kangaroos laze  
in the midday haze

The kookaburras call  
rays of sun fall

This is my country

### **Wild Earth**

*By Zara*

The leaves caressed by the breeze  
the branches left teased  
fragile stems touch the crowded floor  
the creatures in groups of eight but no more

Air screams past the cold souls  
their heart inside hot coals  
calls come from far off lands  
almost replying in a trance

The vibrant touches create a sight  
however, it is more beautiful at night

Freedom swings from branch to branch  
giving us the sweetest chance

### **My Path**

*By Alana*

You stride down your path uncertain  
through the broken branches and cracked leaves

The air around you smells of burnt woodchips  
and old eucalyptus leaves

It's quiet – but not like the quiet you're used to.

Your path as unclear as a lake on a windy day  
the wind passing,  
disturbs the still trees

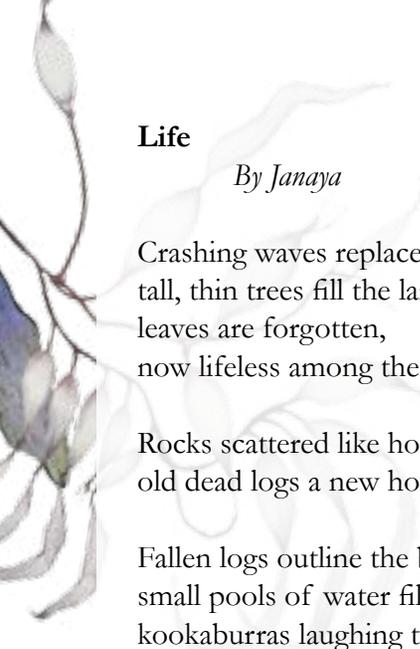
The leaves barricade your path  
trying to dissemble, break you

You feel free,  
safe,  
knowing you're alone

It's cold, you don't feel it  
you remain on your path 'unfocused'  
nothing feels absolute anymore, 'real'

Am I real?  
Is this real?  
Are you real?

Who can answer these questions  
seeing that I am alone,  
forgotten.



## Life

*By Janaya*

Crashing waves replace the wind breeze,  
tall, thin trees fill the land,  
leaves are forgotten,  
now lifeless among the ground

Rocks scattered like homes for wildlife,  
old dead logs a new home for plant life

Fallen logs outline the beauty of the land  
small pools of water fill every dented crevice  
kookaburras laughing together like good ol' mates

A small cocoon waiting to birth a new child  
while dry, unwanted twigs lay amongst  
the cold, wet ground

Moss covers rock just wanting a home  
sparse weeds wanting to belong

While new sprouts want to be all grown up  
and flower buds wanting to bloom into beauty

The air is fresh,  
No pollution, no rubbish

Clean, giving every living thing  
Life

## Untitled

*By Brandon*

So much dead life is mixed with even more living  
This is nature covering up its disappointment caused by humans

Sudden chills of wind  
are replaced by the warm bursts of sunlight

The sound of the leaves  
is similar to the waves  
crashing at a beach

Trees leaning away from civilisation  
trying to escape the devastation

## Wind

*By Leah*

The Wind works its winding  
tendrils around an uncertain subconscious  
that wanders the lonely Earth

## Message to the Future

*By Nash*

The trees so green  
The sky so blue  
Make a perfect combination  
for a winters day  
Can you say the same?

## Breathing

*By Caillan*

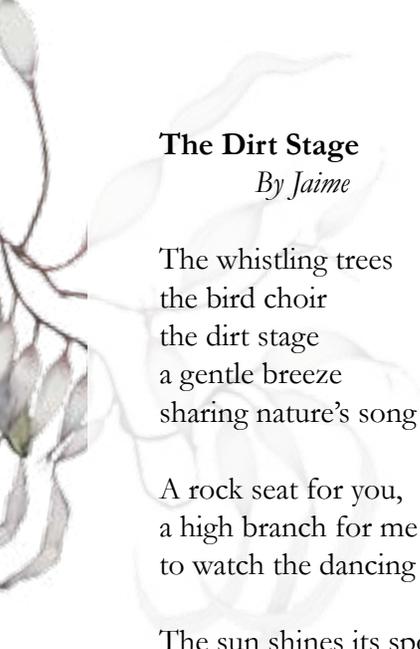
I can breathe

No longer suffocated  
by gas guzzling cars

Or blinded by the lights  
that block out the stars

I'm free to breathe the clean air  
see the shining stars

And feel my steady heart-beat  
as my time to breathe slips away



## The Dirt Stage

*By Jaime*

The whistling trees  
the bird choir  
the dirt stage  
a gentle breeze  
sharing nature's song with the world

A rock seat for you,  
a high branch for me  
to watch the dancing leaves

The sun shines its spotlight  
the bully kookaburras laugh

As performers take their place  
on nature's dirt stage

The performance begins

The bird choir sings!

The leaves dance on their stage  
a gentle breeze whispers – a captive audience,  
for the performers on the dirt stage.

A show of a lifetime!

For you and for me  
watching the world  
from a rock and a tree

## The Sun

*By Renae*

As the  
rays of the  
sun seep through the  
trees, I am calm. Engulfed  
in its warmth... protecting me  
keeping me at ease. As the sun fades  
away over mounds of dirt and rock, I am  
not calm, I am blind I cannot see the unknown  
that lurks around every corner. So I wait. And  
I wait. Until I see the array of colours over  
where the sea, the sea meets the  
sky. I feel warm. I feel calm  
once more. I feel safe  
again for another  
day

## Stolen Moment

*By Jessica*

A fragrant breeze  
cuts through the bitterness

That once was bare  
now fully vibrant

Greens in their hundreds dominate the sky  
popping out against a rich, calm blue

Once a murky swamp  
now a desert oasis

What was once treasured  
soon to be lost



## Untitled

*By Tiana*

The trees are tall,  
the wind is loud  
the birds are chirping,  
the trees sway

The wind stops.

The birds go quiet.

The trees stop moving.

They all stop.

## Home

*By Renae*

As the trees dance, engulfed in the breeze  
it feels natural.

However it doesn't feel like it did  
when we attacked.

We are constantly reminded of our painful past

The swift change of the direction of the wind  
signified how we will end

Run and hide.  
Or stand and fight.

We stole this land, it is not our own  
we hurt this land for our own will

But this is who we are, this is who we will be  
taking other's belongings to survive

One mans resource is another mans home.

## The Shape of Nature

*By Jacinta*

The sound of a leaf falling onto our earth. Like the rain on the roof. Pitter patter. A sense of tranquillity.

At ease, at one with the earth.

The texture of the rock's surface. Bumpy. Its jagged edges so rough, as rough as the harsh gushes of the winds breath.

The fragrant, crisp, fresh, innocent and sweet smell of the wind.

## Rosemary's Rocks

*By Madison*

The trees are talking,  
as if they are telling each other secrets

The birds are chatting,  
wind blowing in my face

It's peaceful and relaxing

## Untitled

*By Brooklyn*

Time stands still  
But the wind continues on

For the trees stay the same  
The leaves play their dancing game

## The Story of the Bush

*By Chloe*

The dry leaves crunch and fallen twigs snap  
as you walk through the bush

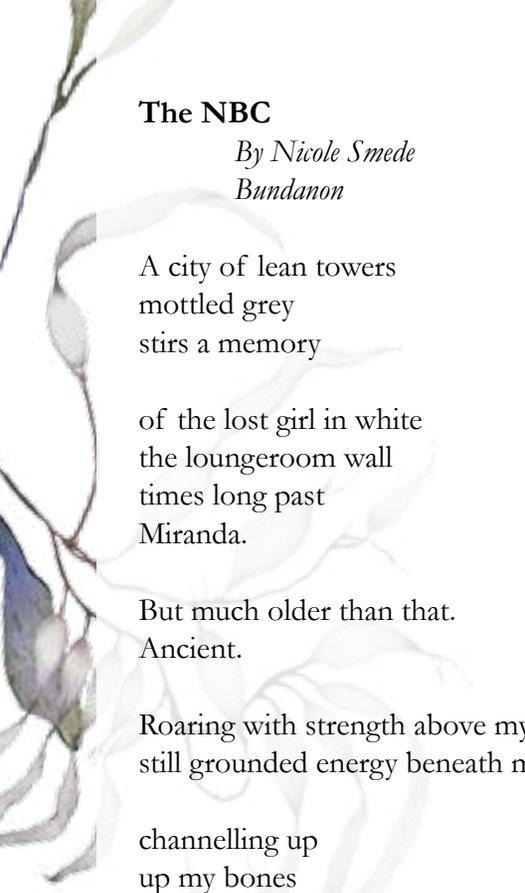
The wind whispers a story to you  
as you sit on a rock

a story of what happened to the trees  
a story of what happened to the fallen branches  
a story behind the leaves  
a story of the animals that call this place home  
a story of what happened in the bush, around where you sit

As you look at the different colours  
and markings on the trees,  
you wonder what happened  
so you keep listening to the wind

As the wind finishes its story,  
you start to listen to the birds talk to each other  
as though all was well

This is the story of the bush  
and as you start to leave  
you know that you will always remember this story



**The NBC**

*By Nicole Smede  
Bundanon*

A city of lean towers  
mottled grey  
stirs a memory

of the lost girl in white  
the lounge room wall  
times long past  
Miranda.

But much older than that.  
Ancient.

Roaring with strength above my head  
still grounded energy beneath my feet

channelling up  
up my bones  
up into my core.

Living.  
Not a city.  
Not mechanical.  
Living.  
A network.  
A community.  
Living.

channelling up.  
up from the core.

