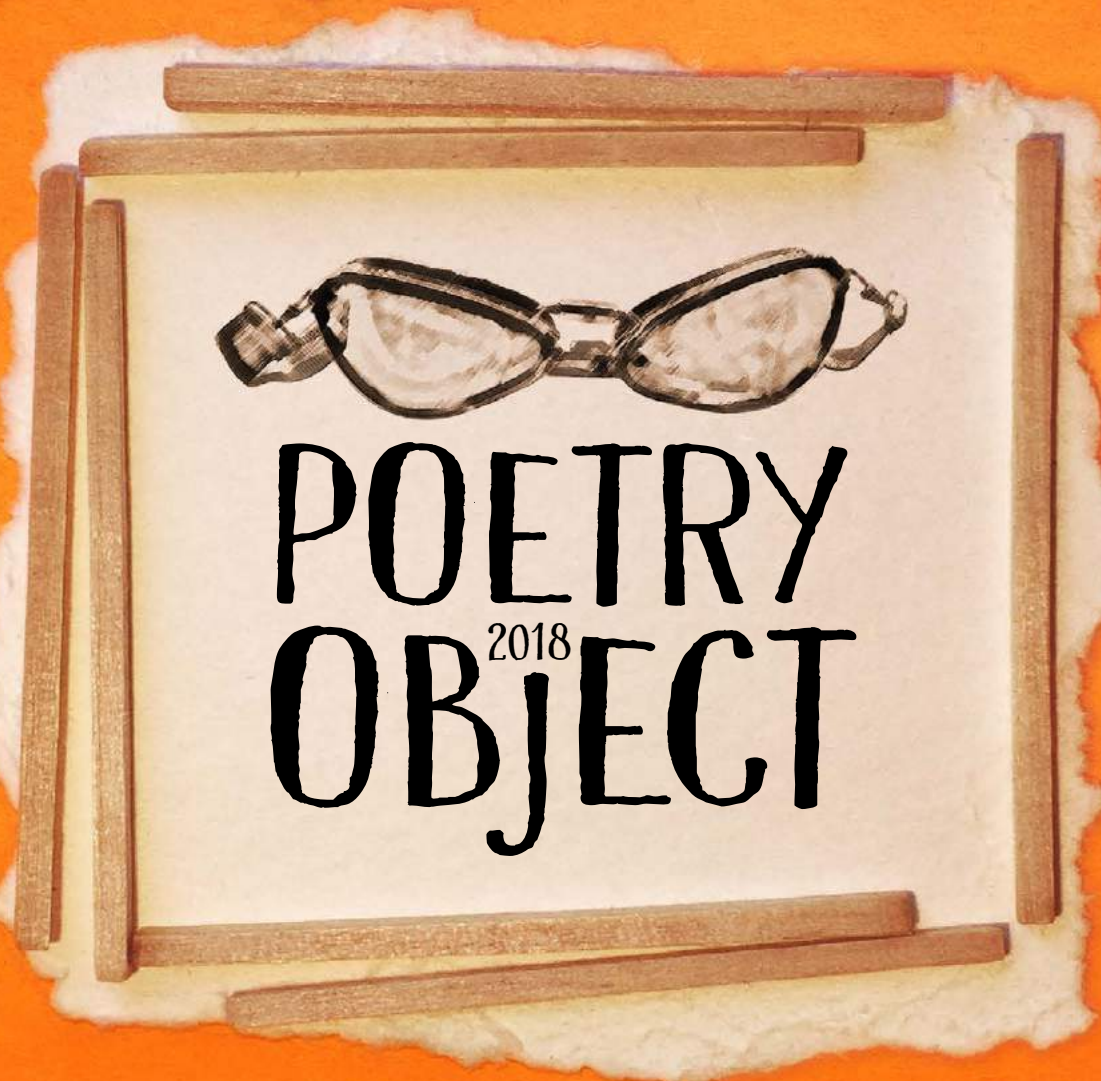


Red
Room
Poetry

Poetry in
Meaningful Ways



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About Red Room Poetry

Red Room Poetry's vision is to make poetry a meaningful part of everyday life. We create poetic projects and learning programs in collaboration with a spectrum of poets, schools, communities and partners for positive social impact. Our mission is to make poetry accessible to all, especially those who face the greatest barriers to creative opportunities.

[Learn more.](#)

About Red Room Poetic Learning

Red Room Poetic Learning brings contemporary poets into classrooms across the country to foster fresh poetic perspectives and support creative curriculum outcomes. Each **Red Room Poetry** program encourages new modes of creation and publication, connecting cultures, languages and communities to release student poems to authentic audiences.

[Learn more.](#)



For Teachers

ABOUT RED ROOM POETRY OBJECT

I am the keeper of a fever
that shimmers inside of me.

'CITY OF DOTS'

Winning Primary Poem by Mim D.



Red Room Poetry Object invites students (years 3–10) and their teachers to write poems inspired by their own special and curious objects. Providing authentic publication outcomes and learning resources, **Poetry Object** is the largest free poetry-writing competition in Australasia.

This year we've teamed up with the National Museum of Australia, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) and the Art Gallery of NSW to enrich our learning resource with historic, scientific and artistic objects. A **Poetry Object** inspired resource, **Poems to Share II**, has also been developed with the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE).

With support from the Copyright Agency and many generous sponsors we've also commissioned new poems from Shastra Deo (QLD), Yvette Holt (NT), Quinn Eades (VIC), Arjun von Caemmerer (TAS), Scotty Wings (VIC) and Courtney Sina Meredith (NZ). Award-winning poet Bella Li (VIC) will be judging shortlisted poems.

All submitted poems by young people and teachers are published in our **digital library**, visited by a worldwide audience of over 250,000 per year. Three winning poems and a school installation will be awarded Prize Packs, with their poems featuring in a public exhibition.

If you're new to **Poetry Object**, welcome! If you're a teacher returning to the competition this year, thank you for continuing to introduce your students to the world of **Poetry Object**. We hope this learning resource enlivens your classrooms with paths for new poetic exploration and creation.

~ The Red Room Poetry Team

How to be involved

- 1 Register your school to receive the entry link
- 2 Explore this resource to gain inspiration for your poem.
- 3 Draft and edit your poems. Then **submit them!**
- 4 Contact us for any questions: poetryobject@redroomcompany.org (02) 9319 5090

KEY DaTES

REGISTER NOW TO ENTER

- **COMPETITION OPENS**
Tuesday 10 April 2018
- **SUBMISSIONS CLOSE**
Friday 28 September 2018
- **ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS**
November 2018

PRIZES

Prizes are awarded in the following categories:

PRIMARY POEM
SECONDARY POEM
TEACHER POEM
SCHOOL INSTALLATION
REX POETRY PRIZES

Emerald green koru unravelled,
Becoming closer to a fern
each and every minute
‘Koru’ by Thomas P.

Publication

All students and teachers who submit to the competition can call themselves published poets! Competition entries are published in our [digital library](#), home to thousands of inspiring voices. Winning poems will be highlighted in a digital exhibition from December 2018. [Explore Poetry Object 2017 Winning and Highly Commended Poems.](#)

Prize Packs

Poetry Prize Packs are made possible with support from our partners and collaborators: Australia Council for the Arts, Create NSW, Graeme Wood Foundation, Copyright Agency, prize partners, and generous individuals.

Winning Student Poems (Primary and Secondary)

- » \$1000 travel voucher for the poet and their family
- » VIP Tour of National Museum of Australia
- » Special tour of Powerhouse Museum (MAAS)
- » Judging commendations and a poetry Prize Pack
- » Poem publication in *PK Mag* (Primary) and *Spine Out Magazine* (Secondary)
- » *Voiceworks* magazine Prize Pack
- » Free subscription to your choice of publication: *Good Reading*, *PK Mag*, *Spine Out Magazine*



Winning Teacher Poem

- » \$1000 travel voucher for the poet and their family
- » VIP Tour of National Museum of Australia
- » Special tour of Powerhouse Museum (MAAS)
- » Judging commendations and a poetry Prize Pack
- » *Voiceworks* magazine Prize Pack
- » Free subscription to your choice of publication: *Good Reading*, *PK Mag*, *Spine Out Magazine*

Winning School Installation and Highly Commended Poems

- » Judging commendations
- » A poetry Prize Pack

REX Poetry Prize

Three categories: Primary, Secondary and Teacher. We've teamed up with Regional Express (REX) Airlines to create a special prize category for regional and remote school communities in REX destinations. Prize packs include REX flights, merchandise and poem publication in the REX inflight publication *True Blue Magazine*.

[Find out if your school is a REX destination.](#)

More prizes to be announced on our website!



For Teachers

JUDGE'S NOTES

POETRY OBJECT 2018 WILL BE JUDGED BY AWARD-WINNING POET BELLA LI.

Bella Li is the author of *Maps, Cargo* (Vagabond Press 2013, shortlisted for the Wesley Michel Wright Prize), and *Argosy* (Vagabond Press 2017) — a book of poetry, collage and photography that won a 2018 Victorian Premier's Literary Award and was commended in the 2017 Wesley Michel Wright Prize. Her next collection, *Lost Lake*, is forthcoming from Vagabond Press in 2018.

More about Bella.

'I am looking for poems that recognise that objects, too, carry with them memories and dreams.'

~ Bella Li



Poetry is an encounter with the world through the medium of language: when you write about a shell, or a piano, or a feather, or a bottle, you are translating what you see, hear, touch, smell and taste into words. To encounter something is to experience it as if for the first time, no matter how familiar it may seem: I am looking for poems that convey this sense of discovery, that move beyond the known and the ordinary to see that which is unusual and unexpected—not only in content, but also in form. Writing, too, can be an act of exploration, and I am interested most of all in poems that challenge expectations about what poetry is and can be.

Objects can be seen, heard, touched, tasted and felt, but they are more than just physical artefacts: **I am looking for poems that recognise that objects, too, carry with them memories and dreams.** Where has your object been? What might it be one hundred years from now?

Objects also help shape our ways of knowing and understanding in a range of different areas. I am looking for poems that engage with the wider world and with other disciplines and genres—**what can your object tell us about, for instance, science, art, history, politics, music or mathematics?**

In poetry, what you say and how you say it are inseparable. **I am looking for poems that pay attention to the details of language, to the way words look and sound;** I am looking, in particular, for poems that use these details to experiment, innovate and change our ideas about form. Is a poem a poem just because it is composed of lines? Can it look different, sound different, to what you've seen and heard before? Can you bend the rules of grammar and syntax, or use words in unfamiliar ways, in order to make us encounter language itself, as if for the first time?

~ Bella Li





For Teachers

Quality CRITERIA

This quality criteria was created by **Red Room Poetry** and a judging panel, in consultation with NSW Public Schools.

The purpose of the quality criteria is to encourage students and teachers to explore and experiment with a range of poetic techniques as well as to ensure poems meet publication and exhibition standards.

The quality criteria aims to enrich the creation of excellent poems and acts as an evaluative framework that enables judges to award poems based on artistic merit, not subjectivities.



QUALITY CRITERIA	Below Standard	Benchmark	Outstanding
PERSPECTIVE (AKA POINT OF VIEW, WRITER'S VOICE)			
<p>The degree to which the poet establishes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a distinctive voice, persona, or speaker • clear OR purposefully ambiguous tone • extraordinary perception of the ordinary • insight into the talismanic object or the student's experience or world • attitude towards their choice of subject matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of the poem is difficult to identify. Student seems unsure of their attitude to their object • Limited personal voice or clichéd perspective • Limited description makes it difficult to recognise or identify the talismanic object • Does not explore the significance of their talismanic object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional perspective (there is a focus on an idea, feeling or experience) • Evidence of the poet's individual voice • Provides insight into their world or experience, even if unsophisticated • Effective description or evocation of the object • Intentional exploration of the significance of the talismanic object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled perspective • Distinctive voice • Perceptive insights about themselves or their world • Sophisticated or highly effective description or evocation of the talismanic object • Meaningful/affective insight into the significance of their talismanic object
COMPLEXITY OF THE POEM			
<p>The degree to which the poet achieves:</p> <p>a) Tension in words and ideas through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an engaging challenge, or paradox • effective ambiguity, multiple meanings • suggestion of connotations beyond the literal • defiance of predictable syntax • use of balance, parallelism, contrast <p>b) Compression to create an intense poetical experience through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoiding unnecessary words • economy of meaning • distillation, condensation of ideas or feelings <p>c) Surprise through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenging assumptions • providing a new way of looking at the object 	<p>Demonstrates little understanding of the compressed nature of poetic expression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unnecessary and/or unimaginative details OR vital detail is missing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of the compressed nature of poetic expression • Achieves complexity and textual integrity through the use of tension, compression and surprise which creates an intense and challenging poetic experience 	<p>Demonstrates an exceptional poetic style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some tension • A sense of discovery • Writes with honesty and authenticity • Poetic style is appropriate and effective



QUALITY CRITERIA	Below Standard	Benchmark	Outstanding
VOCABULARY, SOUND AND SYNTAX			
<p>The degree to which the poet effectively uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fresh and effective vocabulary unconventional syntax syntax that generates the use of sound devices, which includes rhythm and may include alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, refrain and rhyme awareness of the oral-aural connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mundane, unimaginative, imprecise and/or ineffective use of vocabulary No rhythm evident. Sounds like prose Clichéd and ineffective use of sound devices Constrained by rhyme scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imaginative, thoughtful, fresh use of vocabulary Rhythm is mostly consistent with the sense of the poem Syntax that generates sound qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precise and/or evocative use of vocabulary Rhythm complements and enhances the mood of the poem Creative, evocative, musical syntax, which includes disharmony if appropriate
IMAGERY AND FIGURATIVE DEVICES			
<p>The degree to which the poet effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes similes, metaphor, personification and other figurative language selects and arranges concrete sensory detail employs images to represent abstract feelings, ideas suggests uncommon connections between images and figurative meaning demonstrates “metaphoric thought” through implied analogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplistic and/or unimaginative figurative structures Lack of imagery OR a clichéd or confusing use of imagery Abstract statements divorced from concrete imagery 	<p>Figurative structures (which are mostly original) show the relationship of the concrete to the abstract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear images are used to portray ideas 	<p>Well crafted, effective and original figurative structures which may illustrate metaphoric or symbolic thought</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vivid, detailed images that create impact May be experimental in use of imagery
SPATIAL DESIGN			
<p>The degree to which the poet demonstrates a visual concept through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the spatial arrangement of words, phrases, lines and white space choices of spacing, enjambment, punctuation, caesura indentation, upper/lower case letters, typography stanzaic pattern experimentation with punctuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintentional or random design Visual layout inconsistent with the content of the poem Visual layout distracts the reader 	<p>Intentional design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of visual layout to assist the reader to access meaning in the poem 	<p>Careful and/or subtle design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate crafting of visual layout to enhance the reader's response to the poem

About this RESOURCE

Elephants drinking out of a rivulet
the sky is raining sunshine
‘VOLTAIC WIRE’ by Owen M.

Poetry Object activities are designed to help students achieve the following poetry learning milestones:

- » overcome poetry anxiety by beginning with smaller scaffolded writing tasks
- » appreciate the importance of original imagery and word choice in poetry
- » identify and avoid clichés in their writing
- » effective use of a range of poetic techniques to enhance writing
- » consider structure: the impact of lineation, stanza breaks and the shape of a poem on the page
- » understand the importance of drafting and editing
- » publish work for authentic audiences

Designed for a wide range of learning levels (Year 3-10), this versatile resource provides various poetic challenges including:

- » pre-writing prompts
- » writing activities inspired by commissioned poems and reflections
- » NAPLAN extension exercises

All activities are aligned to Australian Curriculum outcomes with codes strategically linked to activities. This resource will also address cross-curriculum priorities such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures (through contemporary First Nations literature) and the General Capabilities of ‘Literacy’ and ‘Critical and Creative Thinking’.



Introducing Poetry Object

For best learning outcomes, we recommend introducing students to the concept of ‘talismanic’ or curious objects through a range of examples. The National Museum of Australia, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and Art Gallery of NSW have curated a selection of curious cultural, historic, artistic and scientific objects to help inspire students.

We have also commissioned six new poems from celebrated voices around Australia and New Zealand to help guide writing and exploration of different poetic styles and perspectives.

Teachers are encouraged to share their own special object and create a poem alongside their students to model the drafting and editing process.

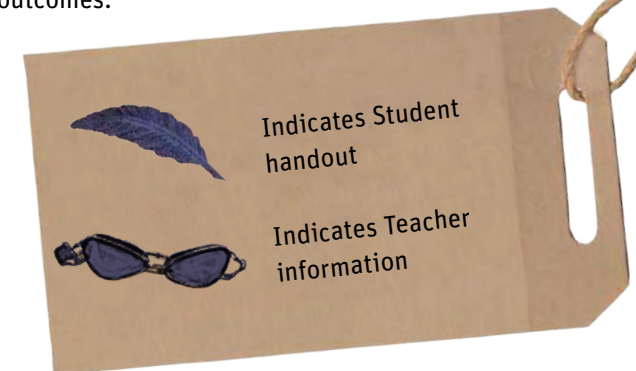
Discover the [Poetry Object Powerpoint and other resource extension lesson plans](#) ready for your classroom.



Using Pre-writing Prompts

Use these pre-writing activities to best suit your class needs. It may be useful to read through the examples, poems and prompts with your class before they select their own **Poetry Object** and begin writing their 20-line poem. Alternatively, students can work silently and individually through the prompts, completing them at their own pace.

Some teachers use our **Poetry Object** learning resource for a single lesson while others develop a term-long program to deepen learning and quality creative outcomes.





For Teachers

GUIDE TO SCHOOL Installations

Classes are encouraged to submit an entry for the School Installation category. An installation is an artistic, often three-dimensional, work designed to transform a space.

Exploring the etymology and history of the 'wunderkammer' may also inspire your class to create their own school installation or 'cabinet of curiosities'.

Creating an installation allows students to explore a range of ways to present their poems visually as well as consider broader potential audiences for their work. Working in groups will also enable students to collaborate towards a team goal. To enter this category, submit images of your installation and a written reflection based on your students' creative process.

Examples of installations and reflections:

Trails and Tales

Poetry Object Kites

The Sole of a Poem

The Cabinet of Lost and Found

Examples of installations:



Trails and Tales

Poetry Object Kites



The Sole of a Poem



The Cabinet of Lost and Found



WHAT MAKES A SPECIAL OBJECT?



In cracks and crevices
of coral and more hidden caves.
Made with hands
as soft as sifted sand.

‘SECRETS OF THE SEA’ by Isobella S.

A special or ‘talismanic’ object may be **curious** because of its **appearance, shape, markings or special personal history**. From carved hieroglyphs to obsidian arrow tips, your special object will hold personal meanings and memories. It can also be helpful to think of the role of an object in your life. Is it a ‘talisman’ that guides and protects you? A reminder of an adventure or the keeper of a secret?

Explore the prompts and pages of **poetic, historic, scientific and artistic artefacts** to help you choose your own special **Poetry Object**.

Choosing Your Special Object

Now nestles in silver crescents
as Mercury hugs the night.

- ‘A LABOUR OF LOVE’ by Ella B.

Think outside the box when it comes to choosing your object. Look around your room or home. Don’t be afraid to feel the objects in your hands.



- » Do you have a handmade gadget, gizmo, artwork or souvenir that no-one else has?
- » Is there an object in your life that might seem ordinary to someone else but is very special to you?
- » What makes this object special?
- » What makes this object unusual?
- » What significant moment do you remember as you feel your object?
- » What history, inner world or secrets does your special object hold?

Explore the special objects from our [2017 shortlist](#).

Discover the [2017 Winning & Highly Commended Poems](#).

Bringing Your Object to School

Before you plunge into the pre-writing prompts, **make sure you have your object with you as you write**. If you don’t have your object during your **Poetry Object** writing sessions, it may be harder to create vivid descriptions that need you to feel, smell, and draw your object!

Once you have selected your special object, ensure you have permission to bring it to school for **Poetry Object** writing activities.

**I will bring my special object to school
on the following date**

-- / -- / --



For Students

Guide to Curious Objects

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA:

Joan Richmond's Driving Goggles



Links

[Joan Richmond's Driving Goggles](#)
[Joan Richmond's number plate](#)

Background

She drove hard and fast with the wind blowing in her face. Along with five other adventurers, Joan Richmond travelled from Melbourne to Europe, exploring distant continents through dust, sand and snow. Driving in three cars, the group took photographs, bought souvenirs, argued and got lost. It was 1931. Why did they make this journey? To compete in the Monte Carlo Rally. And it took four months just to reach the starting line!

Everyone made a fuss of the Australians who had driven across the world. After the race, the group went onto London. There, Joan's new life as a racing car driver really began. She competed in the 1000-mile race at Brooklands with co-driver Elsie Wisdom. They were the first women to win the race. Afterwards, Joan said to a reporter, 'Tell Australia I am very thrilled and proud.'

Joan Richmond wore these goggles. What sights she must have seen...

Discussion Questions

- » What might Joan Richmond have seen when she was wearing these goggles?
- » Joan Richmond's goggles are cracked. How do you think she cracked her goggles?
- » Why do you think Joan kept them for many years even though they were broken?

Poetry Writing Prompt

Imagine what these goggles have seen through their journeys. Has your special object seen some interesting sights? Write about what your object has witnessed in its time with you.

For Students

MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES:

David Hain's Portable Radio



'Handie Talkie' portable radio and documents, wood / glass / electronic components / metal / paper, designed by Radio & Hobbies radio engineers, made and used by David Hain, Sydney, NSW, 1947. Gift of David Hain, 2007.

Curator's Notes, by Campbell Bickerstaff

David Hain was born in 1926 and lived in Lane Cove, New South Wales, all his life. David developed a passion for electronics and carried on a radio sales and repair business, offering home visits for new radio demonstrations and to fix up old sets. To the local community he was the go-to repair guy.

In 2007 I was invited by David's sister to examine the radio material remaining in his house after his death. The visit had a profound impact on me — his collection and documentation demonstrated his interest, expertise and a desire to contribute to the development of radio. Many of the radios included hand-drawn circuit diagrams. One radio, however, came with a photograph that had notes on the back detailing David's recollections:

'This little radio has a long history. I built it long before the advent of transistors. It was a Radio & Hobbies project. I altered the design several times, took it on holidays to Lake Burrill and elsewhere. When transistors became available I used it as a test bed for many circuits. I learnt a lot. I forgot the present status of its works, but I have an affection for it.' ~ David Hain

Discussion Questions

- » Why do you think David surrounded himself with radios?
- » Have you ever tried to repair something broken to keep it alive?
- » What special object would you take with you on holidays?

Poetry Writing Prompt

Imagine you are creating instructions for someone to make your curious object themselves, from scratch. Write an instructional poem for your imagined object maker! Be as fantastical as you like.

EXAMPLE: Camera

Carve a lens from
the bottom of a fish bowl.
Warm a stone in your hands
round the rough edges of glass.
Fashion a shutter
from the fluttering wings
of a firefly.



For Students

ART GALLERY of NSW:

Just like drops in time, nothing by Ernesto Neto

The body and its senses are integral to Neto's work; his installations stretch the membrane that separates art and life. Neto's use of transparent elastic fabric describes the tension of spaces he invades while anthropomorphising architecture. Vast masses of fragrant spice swell the fabric in voluptuous, almost bodily, forms that fill the gallery space and our olfactory organs with its aromatic intensity. Unlike vision, smell entails the physical invasion of the body by the scent's particles. In this way, the sensations evoked by Neto's spice works are involuntary and almost instinctive.

Just like drops in time, nothing has multiple associations, including rain capturing a ray of light or glancing through a forest, but it always refers back to the presence of the body, indicated by the bulging forms and even by the close association of lycra with underwear or stockings. At the same time there is a sublime architectural illusion created by the curving translucent arches that articulate the whole room.



Ernesto Neto
Just like drops in time, nothing 2002
textile, spices, installation
dimensions variable
Art Gallery of New South Wales
Purchased with assistance from
Clayton Utz
© Ernesto Neto

Discussion Questions

- » What does the title reveal about this artwork? What do you think it means?
- » Imagine walking through this artwork. What is the impact of the artwork surrounding you? How does it smell or feel? How is it different to other sculptures you have seen?
- » Imagine you are the artist. Write to a friend telling them about this artwork and how you approached making and installing the work in this space.

Poetry Writing Prompt

Imagine your object in silhouette or shadow. How would it look as words on a page? Create a 'concrete poem' that mimics the shape of your object.

See how poet Arjun von Caemmerer's poem visually resembles his special object, on [page 15](#).

Bonus Activity

As a year or school group, create a school installation to present your poems. For inspiration, view the ["guide to school installations"](#) on [page 9](#).

Shastra Deo

(QLD)



Shastra Deo was born in Fiji, raised in Melbourne, and lives in Brisbane. Her debut poetry collection *The Agonist* (UQP 2017) won the 2016 Arts Queensland Thomas Shapcott Poetry Prize.

More about Shastra.

See activities inspired by Shastra's poetic process on [page 24](#).

COMMISSIONED POEMS



शिवलिङ्ग (Shivling)

Rumour claims it should not be kept
within a home, but it sits now in our spare
room, brass-wrought cobra braced
at its back. I see it, often enough, during prayer,
spent my youth waiting for fissures to cleave
all stirps: a beak to breach soot-soft shell
when my mother doused it in milk. An offering,
perhaps, for feather-pitch creature—happy
to live lineage unknown, settle
in palm for hymns repeated. I have not yet
held it but know it won't yet yield.
Could I crush with it my migratory history
—pluck dirt-dark plumage from my breast—
my dun body would, incarnated, re-
-main, aniconism marked for gods
alone. I know not what comes after
annihilation, only that my mother prays
we have strength enough for flight.

Reflection

The Shivling—which I've referred to as the 'holy egg' for a very long time—is an abstract representation of the Hindu god Shiva. Although I'm not religious, I've watched my family use the Shivling in prayer since I was young, and find its shape and smoothness pleasing. When I think of the word 'talisman', the Shivling instantly comes to mind, though I still haven't held or even touched it. To me, the object exudes a certain power and magnetic pull.

Prayer, I think, is something we do not only to pay homage, but to gain favour. My mother told me that women who are trying to conceive often pray to the Shivling, and I like the idea that the result of prayer could manifest itself physically within the world. After researching more, I decided my starting point was the role that holy objects play in our lives. But the poem returns to the object, and I, always, return to the body, and what it means to have a body that exists between the sacred and the mundane.

[Read Shastra's full reflection online.](#)



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Arjun von Caemmerer

(TAS)



Arjun von Caemmerer is a Hobart-based writer, general medical practitioner, and certified Iyengar Yoga teacher. His concrete poetry has been exhibited widely.

More about Arjun.

See activities inspired by Arjun's poetic process on [page 24](#).

Dolmetsch

For Hanna Neumann (von Caemmerer) (1914-1971)

Stolid. Brown. Plastic.

The Acme Of Uncool. And yet,
This instrument was once owned & blown
By one who, defiant and smoking,
Strolled right past the Nazis;

Who forsook her own country
To raise five children in exile;
Who foraged wildflowers and mushrooms
To fill her bicycle basket
While her husband went wandering.

Exploring pure mathematics,
She broke beyond brackets
Until a blood vessel burst,
Flood-drowned her brain.
A University building now carries her name.

Sometimes I blow her Bakelite blockflöte,
Digits & breath rerouting resistance
Rediscovering and rendering
Hanna's past loves — her Telemann & Co.,
Whose Art of Expiring transfigures time.



Reflection

The poem derives its title from Carl Dolmetsch, the recorder maker who pioneered the use of plastics in their construction. The Dolmetsch Treble BS.3499 that I have in my possession is “Approved to British Standards” and belonged to Johanna (or as she preferred ‘Hanna’) Neumann, my maternal grandmother. It was probably manufactured in the 1940s. Aside from Hanna’s maiden name (which I adopted as my surname some three decades ago), I possess nothing else that belonged to her. I do not even have any memory of meeting her, though I am told I have done so. The instrument, a Treble (or Alto) is made of Dolonite, a form of Bakelite, a hard, dense and dark material that has a pleasing weightiness, and a gravitas that, in this instance, seems quite appropriate.

Hanna was born in Berlin. Her fiancé Bernhard Neumann, also Berlin-born, was Jewish – hence he fled Germany in 1933 and she, who was politically active as a student, protesting against the incursions of the Nazi movement, eventually followed him, initially to Cardiff (in Wales) and later to Oxford, in England. Both were brilliant and influential mathematicians. They immigrated to Australia in 1963, accepting academic positions at the Australian National University in Canberra. They shared many passions, including a love of chamber music and a keenness for exploring the natural environment. The recorder was Hanna’s, recently gifted to me by their youngest child, my uncle Danny.

Despite my rather rudimentary playing skills—likely a consequence of adopting the instrument at around the age of 50—it still feels somehow very connecting (across culture, time and interests), as well as very intimate, to be able to play her old instrument. Pleasingly, this Dolmetsch (which means ‘interpreter’) does not resist my fumbling overtures!

Courtney Sina Meredith

(NZ)



Courtney Sina Meredith is a writer and performer based in Auckland. Her poetry and prose have been translated into Italian, German, Dutch, French, Spanish and Bahasa Indonesia.

More about Courtney.

See poetry activities inspired by Courtney's poetic process on [page 24](#).

Rosary

I used to watch her pray
 green beads in soft palms
she worked herself to the bone at the denim factory
 but when she came home
her rosary was waiting.

I used to open her jewellery box
 and hold the rosary in my hands
breathing in her prayers for the aiga to prosper
 for the rose bush to flower
for life to be easier on her granddaughter.

We used to go along to midnight mass
 and watch the women show their children
angels painted in the windows
 while the congregation rose
to sing Christmas hymns.

We said goodbye too soon
 the house lost her scent
but the roses bloomed
 and I went out into the world
with her rosary.



Reflection

This poem is about my favourite person – my grandmother Rita, who passed away when I was six years old. We had great adventures together, she was very creative, a wonderful cook, and the kind of person who lit up every room she walked into.

When you write poems: you time travel, create new worlds, share new knowledge about yourself and the world around you. I am still getting used to people reading my words in different parts of the world, even when I wrote this poem – I imagined it being read by smart, funny, inquisitive, interesting young people. Writing about solid things that you can reach out and touch can be a lot of fun. The great joy of writing is how surprising it is – you may have an idea or plan for how you want it to go, but oftentimes that changes as you write.

When you discover the quiet place in you that loves to write about your thoughts and feelings, you might see something and write about it in a way that no one ever has before. Every time you come back to the page, you open your heart to magic... the magic to communicate across classrooms, cities, countries – and maybe even centuries. I loved writing this special poem about my grandmother's rosary because it meant I got to write about someone really special and important to me.

Yvette Holt

(NT)



Yvette Holt is a poet, comedienne, feminist, academic, desert dweller!

More about Yvette.

See poetry activities inspired by Yvette's poetic process on [page 25](#).

yeperenye notes

last night, by the falling waistcoat
of a half-caste desert moon
discreetly, deliberately
i heel away from somnolent flutes
water-coloured caterpillars and testaments of olde
\
into a floral jar of untitled clay-pans and
annotated spinifex
inhaling burgundy stained pages of
handwritten riverbeds
silently, incessantly
quilling louvered hours of jaundiced
memories
\
by ceremonial seas of ante meridiem
echoing curlews ribbon my desiccated
tongue
mirroring speech
if only occasionally
quite lucidly, most insanely
i delight in the sweet palm of darkness



Reflection

Having lived and worked in the greater Central Australian region for over eight years, I have travelled many, many thousands of kilometres zig-zagging over three Australian borders including; Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, servicing some of the most extreme remote communities on the continent. The ethereally ancient landscape which canvas these long remote journeys is truly a gift of supreme blessing. Imagine travelling week in and week out to places you never even knew existed, with names you have never ever heard of? Combine these feelings of excitement and awareness with contouring, ever-changing hues and archaeological Dreaming wonders.

Nowadays I am based in the outback regional town of Alice Springs, or as it is known to the local Aboriginal people Mpwernte (pronounced em-bart-a-wah). Surrounding Mpwernte we are enveloped in the MacDonnell Ranges – local Aboriginal lore depicts these ranges as Yeperenye (pronounced yep-a-ren-ya), sleeping caterpillars. My poem reflects my own personal mapping of local cultural observations and my writing methodology (including insomnia through needing to write in the midnight hours), as well as saturation of landscapes. The 'waistcoat' in the first line of the poem is the sun setting upon the ranges – the Yeperenye. Each time I looked at the sun setting upon those ranges it reminded me of how the reclining desert sun also disrobes through the ever-changing hues and saturations of colours.

Quinn Eades (VIC)



Quinn Eades is a researcher, writer, and poet. Eades is the winner of the 2017 Arts Queensland XYZ Award for Innovation in Spoken Word, and he is currently working on a book-length collection of fragments written from the transitioning body, titled *Transpositions*.

More about Quinn.

See activities inspired by Quinn's poetic process on [page 25](#).

Inheritance

Crystal hung window,
the way you throw
rainbow shards at the walls
when the earth tilts towards the sun.

My sister and I begged you
to tell us what it was like
out there after you were gone.
I'll send you a message, you said,
your violet eyes full of intent.

You left from a Sydney hospice bed,
the covers barely raised.
Too thin for your body
to make an impression,
your head cradled above
the broken stalk of your neck.

Months later I was given my inheritance.
A crystal swinging
from a turquoise beaded fishing line.
I hung it in my window,
where it would catch light best.

I waited for the sun,
for your redblueyelloworange yell,
for a message made of light and cut glass.
A message that sends as the earth turns.
All colour, the brightest hello.

Reflection

When my sister and I were little we lived with our grandmother, because our mum was too unwell to look after us. My grandmother believed in ghosts and astral travelling. She was doing yoga in the 1940s (well before it was fashionable) and carried crystals in her pockets in the 1950s. She also believed there was an afterlife. My sister and I asked her to find a way to send us a message after she was gone, and she said she would. When she died, I was given three things: some antique silverware, an oil painting of white daisies, and a teardrop-shaped crystal that hung on a piece of fishing line strung with blue beads. Now, when the sun hits her crystal, and throws rainbows around my bedroom, it feels like she's sending me that message. She's saying hello from wherever it is that she is. This is my inheritance.



Scotty Wings (VIC)



Scotty Wings is a performance artist, poet, physical theatre practitioner and event host based in Melbourne, Australia.

More about Scotty.

See activities inspired by Scotty's poetic process on [page 25](#).

Post-Extinction Banquet

You know the star on my wrist?
Gutted.

The infinity symbol on the back of my neck?
Chewed.

The quill on my forearm?
Snapped and shattered.

The guy with a flower sprouting from his head?
Gouged out,
Eyeball hanging.

A lone petal floats into a pond of blood.
Bloop bloop.

The bowl of noodles — the one above my elbow?
Slurped.
Empty.

The dot-work on my hip?
A giant's footprint smeared the spots together.

Every panel of ink on my body?
Teeth marks.

Every tattoo I have?
Yeah.

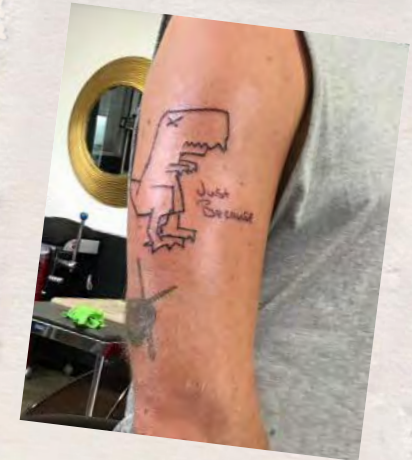
Every single tattoo.
Has been eaten.

Ever since I got that one?
You know?
Of
the T-Rex?

Reflection

This piece was fun to write. I love animating the inanimate. Movies like *Toy Story* or *Pets*, where secret lives are revealed, are enormously enjoyable. I found it difficult to limit the story to a series of snapshots. I think exploring the tattoos further is going to be great in a performance piece.

There is something appealing about destruction. So when I got my new tattoo of my dinosaur I immediately wondered how hungry he was and whether the other tattoos were friends or foes. I think they are friends, but I wrote it as a dinosaur rampage anyway just for kicks.





PRE-WRITING PROMPTS

Now that you have explored treasured objects and poetic process from other people, it's time to begin drafting your own special object poem. The following activities will help you get started.

Group Activity: Metaphors

Further develop your original imagery and playful language by using **metaphors** to express the ideas and feelings associated with curious objects. A **metaphor** is a poetic device that makes a direct comparison between two things, without the use of the words as or like.

As a group, share ideas to complete the metaphors below.

E.g. *The lucky token is a time capsule.*
The lucky tokens are exploding stars as I toss them into the air.

Joan Richmond's driving goggles are

David Hain's radio is a

Ernesto Neto's artwork is a

Refer to **pages 11-13** for inspiration on the objects above.

Create a group poem inspired by a special object in your classroom. **Discover our guide to writing group poems.**

Ways of Seeing

Draw your object in as many different ways as you can:

- » eyes closed
- » unstopping line
- » left-handed

Drawing Inner Worlds

Now, imagine the inner world of your special object. Do lorikeets live inside your pocketwatch? Is there a planet hiding within your smallest babushka doll?

Draw what your eyes cannot see.



Guiding Questions

For this activity you will need a pen and a piece of lined paper. Clear off your desk so that you have nothing on it except your writing materials and your special object.

- » Write an **imagined history** for your special object. Where was it 'born'? Which land did it come from? How did it find you?
- » What is the secret of your special object? Does it have a secret mission?
- » Write about the adventures that your object embarks upon while you sleep.
- » Describe your most memorable moment with your special object.
- » Imagine your object can speak. What does it say to you?
- » Imagine you are describing your object to someone without sight or over the phone. Describe your object with a list of vivid images.



Kambarang:
 Wildflower Season.
 An abundance of colours.
 The Season of Birth.
 ~ 'HAIKUS' by Felix S.



For Students

PRE- WRITING PROMPTS



- » Create a list of **sensory similes** that imagine what your object smells, feels, tastes, sounds and looks like? Eg: *Tastes like a tropical fruit in the middle of winter.*
- » How is the object like an animal you know? Write a line or two in which you explain how the object is like an animal.
- » Use a **metaphor** to describe your object (A metaphor is a direct comparison where one thing is said to be another). E.g. *My seashell is a time machine.*
- » Write a sentence in which you use **onomatopoeia** to describe your object. Eg. *The babushka doll clip-clops closed as I hide secrets inside.*
- » Write a line that uses **alliteration** to describe your object. E.g. *Under the sun, my oyster shell oscillates between orange and obsidian.*
- » Research the origins of your special object. Create a **myth** about the creation of your special object. You may use real facts or weave a fictional tale. What are the best things about your special object? You can use these ideas to write an **ode** inspired by your object.
- » What does your object represent? Write three **symbols** to express what your object means to you. E.g. *The star on my pendant is a compass pointing north.*
- » Use different styles of **voice** to evoke particular emotional responses in your reader. Experiment with writing from the voice of someone who is:
 - (a) angry
 - (b) excited
 - (c) amazed
- » Use **personification** to write three first-person 'I' sentences from the perspective of your curious object.
- » List five facts about your object. Use **hyperbole** to exaggerate these facts. Using this poetic device will add drama and humour to your poem.
- » Think of the name and the features of your object. Create at least three **puns** based on your **wordplay**. Include these puns in your poem.
- » Explain how you would feel if your object was lost or destroyed.



OVERCOMING CLICHÉ



Discuss what is meant by a **cliché**. As a class, list the obvious images and reasons why clichés make for weak writing.

Complete the first column with the cliché and the final column with your own specific image to create an original **simile**. A simile is a poetic device that compares two things with the use of the words as or like.

TIP:
It may help to read Mauree Applegate's poem 'Be Specific' before you begin this task.

Explore our learning resources for a full list of supplementary activities, including an expanded resource on overcoming cliché.

Starter Clichés

E.g: *As fast as a cheetah*

As silent as

As tender as

As crunchy as

As ancient as

As strange as

Original and Unusual Imagery

E.g: *As fast as a comet tail whispering into the cobalt sky*

As silent as

As tender as

As crunchy as

As ancient as

As strange as

Block-Out POETRY

Write a micro-story about your object. When you finish, choose words and phrases that you want to stand out from the rest of the text. With a marker, cross out the lines that surround your chosen words and phrases. Write out the remaining words to capture your new poem.

Extension Activity

Consider the **block-out poem** you have just created. Now try adding words and phrases to these words and avoid using the same ideas you used in your micro-story.



Poem Lineation Exercise

Lineation refers to the way poems are arranged and broken into lines rather than sentences like prose. Lineation is a tool that poets use to emphasise, change, or challenge meanings in their poems. Explore notable **Poetry Object** poems that utilise unconventional lineation: "**Rosary**" by Courtney Sina Meredith, "**Shivling**" by Shastra Deo and '**subsumed; June celebration**' by **Jeremy Balius**.

Read the poems aloud. How did the line breaks affect the way you read the poems? In groups, discuss the role of lineation in these works.

When drafting your poem, write out three versions with different lineation and line break choices in each. Decide on which version best expresses your poetic voice and message.



Bonus Resources

Explore our learning resources for a full list of supplementary activities, including an expanded resource on lineation based on Eileen Chong's poem 'Mid-Autumn Mooncakes'.



Activities inspired by Shastra Deo

- » Write a poem about the places your object has travelled to before reaching you.
- » Does your object also hold significance to your community? Write about the significance of your object in your family, neighbourhood, religion or country.
- » Write a poem about how your object was made. Was it carved into the ground? Was it assembled by hand? What does its design tell you about its creator?
- » Shastra uses uncommon words such as *stirp*, *dun* and *aniconism*. Encircle the adjectives you've used in your poem. Is there a more unusual way of expressing these ideas? Dive into a **thesaurus** to discover unique synonyms.



Activities inspired by Arjun von Caemmerer

- » Recall the important experiences and memories you share with your object. Write a poem without mentioning the names of your object, or any places or people.
- » Think of the shape of your object. How can you make your poem resemble that shape? Experiment with form by cutting up the lines of your poem and building a structure inspired by your special object.
- » Write a poem with a **refrain**. Use at least three repeating lines. These repeating lines could be a trail of thought, some speech or perhaps a phrase containing onomatopoeia.



Activities inspired by Courtney Sina Meredith

- » Research the **etymology** of your special object. Write a poem about the new ideas that emerge from your research.
- » Where do you keep your special object? Write a poem about the place that keeps your object safe.
- » If your object was given to you by a loved one, write a poem about the experience of receiving your object. This experience can include your reaction to receiving it and what it means to you.



Activities inspired by
Yvette Holt

- » How does your object live, move and experience? Write a poem with every line beginning with a verb.
- » Identify and explain how Yvette's language features (like verbs and adjectives) change her poem. Review and edit your own poem in consideration of this.
- » Research and find a translation or synonym for the name of your object. How does this new word or language construct a new meaning for your poem?



Activities inspired by
Quinn Eades

- » If your object is an inheritance like Quinn's, write a poem about what it means to you. Be as detailed as you can in describing the memory of accepting your special object.
- » Write about the colourful worlds within your object. Roiling ocean blues? Dewy forest greens?
- » How does your object change according to its environment? Does it change colour, texture, form? How does it behave in different lights, or underwater, or under a hot summer sun? Write about your special object's changing behaviours.



Activities inspired by
Scotty Wings

- » Write a poem full of questions to ask your object. You can also include your object's responses.
- » Write a 20-line poem with just one word per line. Try to be as minimalistic as you can. Choose action words, sounds, images and emotions that relate to your object.
- » List down five main words you would use to describe your object. Avoid using these words and try for unique synonyms instead.
- » How have other things in your life changed since you obtained your special object? Write about how your object has 'eaten up' by other parts of your life, for better or worse.

NAPLAN Extensions

Years 3-6

Build-a-Poem

On large piece of cardboard or paper, write your favourite **Poetry Object** poem and cut out the words one by one. Rearrange the words and construct a new poem. This activity hones **grammar skills** and **word order rules**.

Mnemonic Poem

A mnemonic is a phrase that helps learners remember new information. A variation to an acrostic poem, this exercise invites you to think of strange, compelling adjectives that relate to the name of your **Poetry Object**.

e.g. for 'Telescope':

Tantalizing

Electromagnetic

Luminous

Eccentric

Star-gazing

Celestial

Optical

Parabolic

Equatorial

Years 7-10

Poetic Devices

Compose a poem using one or more of the following poetic devices:

- » alliteration
- » personification
- » simile
- » metaphor
- » direct speech
- » original imagery

[Explore more NAPLAN-style resources on our website.](#)

NAPLAN Outcomes

- » Language Conventions: grammar and punctuation.
- » Marking Criterion: Ideas, vocabulary, cohesion, sentence structure and punctuation

[More information on NAPLAN outcomes.](#)





For Teachers

USING YOUR PRE-WRITING



Use the material you have produced until now, to help compose your final poem!

- » Read over your writing and **circle** or **highlight** any images or words that stand out or appeal to you.
- » Circle any images or phrases that you feel are poetic.
- » Circle or highlight any words, phrases or images that describe your special talismanic object.
- » Circle any phrases or words that help explain why your talismanic object is important to you.
- » Circle any words or phrases that you feel might go into a good title for your poem.
- » Put a line through anything on the previous pages that you feel is boring, unfitting or unhelpful to you in composing your poem.
- » Copy out everything that is circled or highlighted onto a new sheet of paper. Use this material as the starting point or stimulus for your poem.

Editing your poem

You have the first draft of your **Poetry Object** poem! Congratulations. Before you submit your piece, be sure to edit and further refine your work. **Editing** is a vital part of the writing process. This will enable you to have a critical look at what works and what doesn't work in your poem. Follow the tips below to revise your poem:

- » **Read your poem aloud.** Do some words or phrases sound like they don't belong in your poem? You can remove these and find alternative ways of expressing your ideas. How else could you say it?
- » **Find the most important line or idea in your poem.** Do the surrounding lines support this? If not, you might want to cut or rewrite them.

- » **Review the adverbs** you may have used in your piece. Instead of using these adverbs, opt instead for a more evocative verb to convey your idea (e.g. use 'sprint' or 'dash' instead of 'run quickly').
- » **The opening lines set the tone of the poem.** In poetry, the tone is the emotion or attitude of the speaker or narrator. Make sure the tone of your stanzas remains consistent.
- » **Peer review. Ask for another opinion.** Other readers will have fresh eyes as they approach your poem. Listen to their suggestions and revise your work. Use this **peer reviewing guide** for the best results!

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Object Poem ACTIVITY

To enter the 2018 competition, compose an original poem inspired by your special object.

Your poem should be **no more than 20 lines in length** and should show that you've explored some of the poetic techniques in this learning resource. (eg. simile, metaphor, imagery, alliteration...)

After drafting your poem, remember to edit it individually or in pairs, checking spelling and removing clichés.

Once your school has registered, ask your teacher for links to the **online publishing form**.

**DEADLINE: Friday 28 Sept
2018, 5pm AEST**

All submitted poems will be published in our **digital library**.



Name:

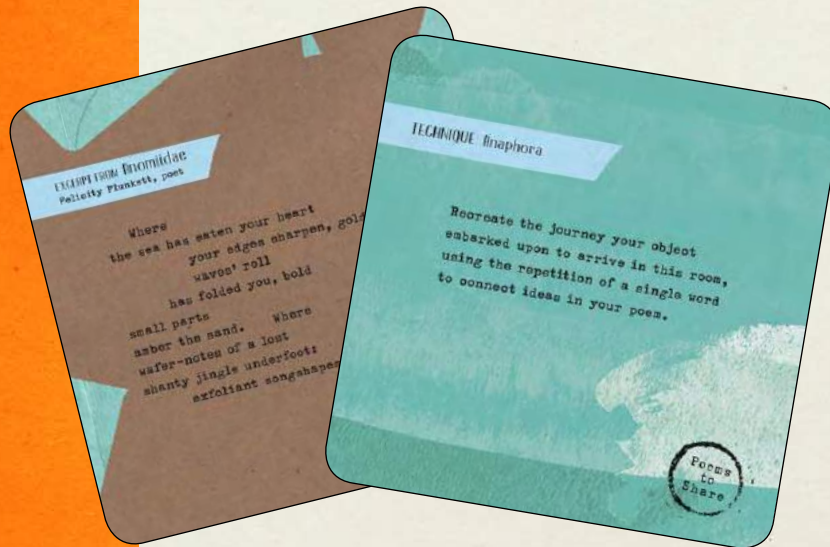
Poem Title:

1.
2.
3.
4.
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6.
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11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.
17.
18.
19.
20.

Extension Activity

Write a **reflection piece** about your poetic process. See examples from other poets on pages 14-19.

Poems to Share II



Poems to Share II is a collaboration between Red Room Poetry and the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE).

Poems to Share II is a **print and digital resource** that features 40 x poetic activity cards with poems by students, teachers and commissioned poets. The teacher-created activities **inspire creation, sharing and publication of poetry** as well as **curriculum-linked** outcomes.

A token from the sea that
clasps the shore.

You are a prism of frosted light

~ from 'SEA GLASS' by Kimberley S.,
Year 10, Darwin High School, NT

Poems to Share II will be launched
at the AATE National Conference in July 2018.

Win a Copy

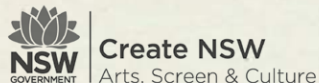
Join our mailing list for updates and grab your chance to win **one of five free Poems To Share II boxed sets** for your school. To join, send an email to poetryobject@redroomcompany.org with your name, school, postal address, phone and email by July 30, 2018.

Purchase Your Copy

Visit our [website](http://www.redroomcompany.org), or send an email with your name and contact number to poetryobject@redroomcompany.org.

Call us at (02) 9319 5090 for more information.

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Judith Pini

CONTACT US

If you would like to discuss any aspect of **Poetry Object** or book a poetry workshop please contact our Poetry Object Coordinator Emma Rose Smith, on (02) 9319 5090 or poetryobject@redroomcompany.org

You can also read more about **Poetry Object** and **Red Room Poetry** [here](#).

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