



Darwin Middle School, 2014

***The Disappearing* with poet Sandra Thibodeaux**

As part of a special pilot program supported by the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, Sandra Thibodeaux joined The Red Room company to present a series of intensive poetry workshops to Year 9 students from Darwin Middle School. Sandra guided the students to create and publish their own poems inspired by themes of disappearing, transformation and change.

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.

**13 steps
by Remi G.**

13 steps to nowhere
where a life ends
to replenish another
where holes in the walls
ooze memories

13 steps to nowhere
where life splashes
playing with fire
where freedom roams
heedless of foreboding

13 steps to nowhere
where flowers bloom
to passers by
where life flourishes
in the face of death

13 steps to nowhere
where students run
hiding from the future
as confetti lightens
the dark of day

13 steps to the future
and the future is here

**Lifeless
by Kitty N.**

A blood-crusted towel rubs her,
Friction heats her steel body
As she eyes the animal fur
From a distance, on her hook.

A giant hand grips her
Holding her upside-down
She sees him, full of life
Along with its fearful frown

A swing, a whoosh, a force
A force greater than gravity
Only from the meaty hands
Of a cruel being with cavities

A heavy impact, a fluffy world
Then the warmth engulfs her gleaming body
Red blinds her vision
In the distance, a muffled squeal

The red turns blue, hot to cold
Beating of its heart stops abruptly
As she exits the world of red
Back into the atmosphere of the Tank

He's lifeless.

**The Tank
by Emily O.**

Life in a place of death
What was once a horror scene,
Dripping with blood
And smelling of decay
Is now a peaceful place
Where children study
Within the walls
Learning about what used to be

**The Tank
by Anya R.**

Where animals were slaughtered
Flesh rotted, and blood would pour
A large building stood
Holding death within it

Red as a rose, the floor became
After heartless workers
Ripped life apart
Destroyed helpless souls

After years passed
And changes were made
Almost everything was forgotten
About the animals that once laid

The old demolishing walls
Repaired by cement
No longer hold the animals
It used to hold within

A tree rips through the walls
Desperately trying to bring back the life
Where death once laid

Birds sing by the tranquil pond
Covering the sound of the animals crying
Life is being replaced

**The Tank
by Juliette P.**

Blood dribbles down my iron walls,
Animals are slaughtered,
As those on the front are soon to be
Carnage stains me; shrieks make me tremble
But still I stand tall

The last bullet sounds,
And blood is drowned by water,
Forgotten past, hopeful future,
Laughter splashes corrugated iron

My stomach bustles with students
Life in a place of death
Firsts, lasts and happy times,
The school has since forgot

New life grows where old life dies
The echoes of screams, masked by laughter,
A new bud blooms
As we forgive, forget.

**The Tank
by Gabrielle S.**

The animals hang aligned,
And create a stench of decay and death.
The blood haunts the walls,
And horrors seep through
the fractures in the brick.

The spirits of the animals,
Now inhabit pools of laughter.
The children climb the ladders,
Unaware of the previous slaughter.

The students who are now learning,
Within the walls of recollection,
Study the remnants
Of a past that was disappearing.

**The Tank
by Teuwira**

Once housing animals,
Awaiting a cruel demise.
Slaughtered to feed hungry soldiers,
Sliced open, dripping red.

Once holding water,
A deep dark abyss,
And on hot and humid days,
A place where children play.
Once blood now runs water.

Currently, Nature reclaims the land.
Vines intertwine with steel.
Trees topple brick.
Grass covers cement.
Metal rusts away
Animals frolic where animals once died.

**Autopsy
(Group Poem)**

Based on an ABC TV report of Cyclone Tracy

'Twas the night before Christmas.
Restless children bundled in sheets
awaited unknown surprises,
slept through a rising shriek
as the clock struck midnight.

Midnight:

dreams lost in chaos, darkness beckons,
engulfing the bones of broken homes,
skeletons ripped of flesh.
No longer fit to house a home.
Frames no longer ...

Frames that no longer house souls
swallowed by an abyss. Metal carcasses strewn
in a street autopsy. Roads cracked
like the lips of the elderly.
The toys of neighbourhood boys
play with ghosts. Life left behind.

Life left behind,
drenched in tears of the broken,
abandoned in Dystopia.
A town in ruins,
an act of drunken disaster,
childhoods stolen.

Stolen by the wind,
houses stripped of the life inside,
shattered souls leak from framed eyes.
Origami unraveling.
Like loved ones in mourning,
sheets of iron embrace lifeless trees.

Trees defeated,
hope drips from ceilings,
drip drop.
Clouds empty.
A town void of substance,
yet, in the sunlight,
green grass triumphs.



Poet Bio

Sandra Thibodeaux is a Darwin playwright and poet. She has written nine plays, six of which have been staged as part of the Darwin Fringe Festival. Other plays have featured in the Darwin Festival and the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival. Sandra has published two volumes of poetry, and her writing has been featured in national and international journals. Sandra's work has been broadcast on ABC Radio (Northern Territory), Radio National's Poetica and Radio National's The Deep End. Living in Darwin, she speaks from a context that is, as she perceives it, markedly Indigenous and South-East Asian. Her poetry also articulates a feminist understanding of the world. Sandra also writes songs and her band, Ben Her, has released its debut CD, Spartacus.

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.