

Eucalyptus Eco Poetry Project Bombaderry High School

The **Eucalyptus Eco Poetry Project** is a “branch” of the *New Shoots* project and a collaboration between Red Room Company and Bundanon Trust.

New Shoots celebrates, cultivates and collects poems inspired by plants to deepen our personal and cultural connections with nature.

Supported by the Dahl Trust, at Bundanon, the Eucalyptus Eco Poetry Project helped us to connect and commune with eucalyptus through a poetic lens, uncovering the hidden stories of the iconic green giants we often take for granted.

Find out more about *New Shoots*
redroomcompany.org/projects/new-shoots

“Eucalyptus is the world’s second largest genus of large trees, after the figs, yet figs are spread over six continents while eucalypts are confined to one.”
~ Tim Low, *Where Song Began*

Eucalypts, more than any other plant family, visually identify Australia. There are over 900 eucalypt species which have adapted to nearly every environment. Included in the Eucalypt family are the genus *Angophora* and the recently recognised *Corymbia*.

Eucalypts are believed to have evolved from ancient rainforest species in response to great changes in continental movements as well as the landscape, soils and climate of Australia. In south-eastern Australia, nearly all eucalypt species have green leaves and yellow-white flowers. Elsewhere, in tropical regions and Western Australia there are more spectacular flowers.



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New Shoots: poems inspired by plants



Afternoon speaks
by Amy F

As I listen to the slight
wind, as it softly brushes
the long leaves together.
Each mark on the branch
tells us a different story.
As the sun goes down, behind
the yellow bloodwood trees.
The birds fly away, never
to be seen.

In Your Backyard
by Jade M

round and round,
the scribbly gum moths,
making their mark,
sanded back with a smooth edge,
with a grey tint,
standing out,
in your own backyard,
for all to see.

Winter's Light
by Jesse B

Smooth but bumpy,
rugged and edgy.
She breathes in the fresh winter air
and sways her branches in the wind.

Daylight strikes.
She reaches up high towards the sky finding sunlight.
Her leaves glowing with morning light.

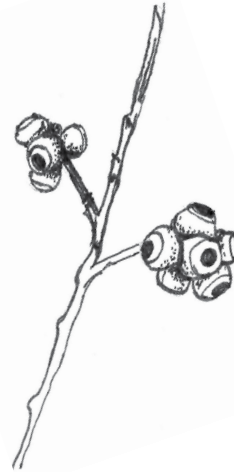
She stands tall and strong.
Every mark telling a story of a thousand years.

Untitled
by Luke C

The dull, rugged edge
slowly lowering its limbs,
struggling to breathe into the darkness.

The bright sun shined through,
every limb leaf and every gap.
Slowly shining into the beauty

Limbs rose up, colours started to appear.
The trees are truly alive.
The strong chunky bark from the
ironbark. Tall with a dark grey highlighting
the tree. Dull green leaves covering the tree.





A whole new world
by Alyssa P

Peeking through a world of
dirt seeing the life giving
sun for the first, breathing in
the smell of rain
this seedling has seen
many firsts all in the time
we sit not knowing a new
life is born.

Beauty of the Thoughts!
by Faith A

As I watch the leaves fall from the sky,
I think of why did it fall,
How long it had been there,
The secrets it has been told,
What has it heard,
What has it seen,
That's what I think,
When I see leaves fall
from a eucalypt tree.

long living tree
by Blake H

nothing happens, the only movement was
not of its own happening but the blaze of
the wind. pushing it shoving it into an
unknown position. Its long life of observing,
pondering, looking for significance and change.
somehow out of all the floods, fires and rains
that have scared, bleed, and scratched its
way into its life. the only thing that seemed
significant to its life its self

Untitled
by Beau B

Tall wet core. Thick dry bark.
Dark scaley leaves, hang with life.
Bland dry leaves surrounding.
Watching fresh fruits blossom.
Young leaves roam free.
Dead leaves admire from below.
Not forgetting the past.
Wet leaves not prepared for the future
No warning. Nothing can stop it.
An unaware cycle.

Untitled
by William J. F

Their differences are many,
but they survive close together.

The ages are many,
through which they have grown.

They see lives go by,
unending despair.

The sorrows of man,
never ending, never changing.

The old wise gum,
with its impartial eye.

Sees all, and watches it go by.

Southern Blue Gum
by Lily C

Layers of bark,
with-holding many secrets,
when two become one
to create the Southern Blue Gum.

Merging together make
a majestic tree
The Southern Blue Gum
reminds me of my mum

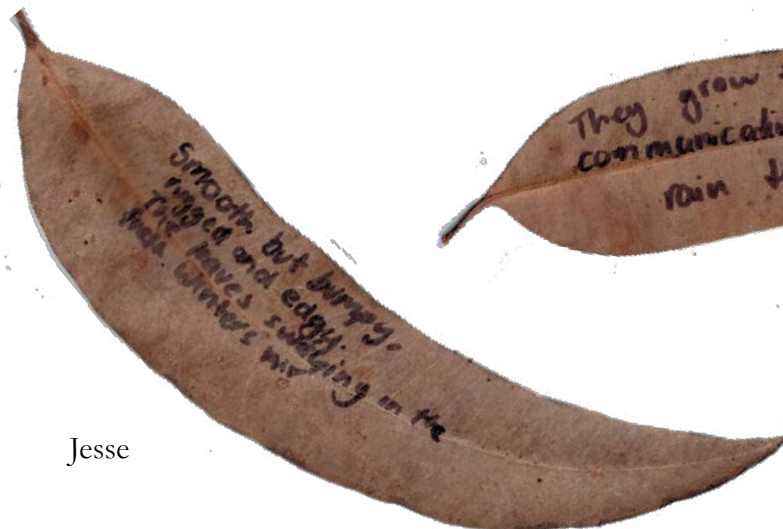
Its firm roots provide
stability and hope,
like a boat on rough water

Hoping one day shedding
bark like tears

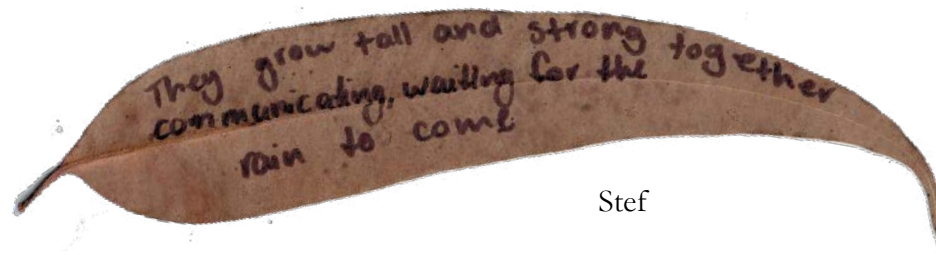
Flora's Face
by Jess W

The eucalypt stands a solid guardian, watching
the ways of the world. His face scarred with
lines of weariness, flood, drought, storm.
Pierced with innocence, colour, light, lit in
a gown of glory. Tendrils of creeper
clutching at roots, wanting a part of his
story.

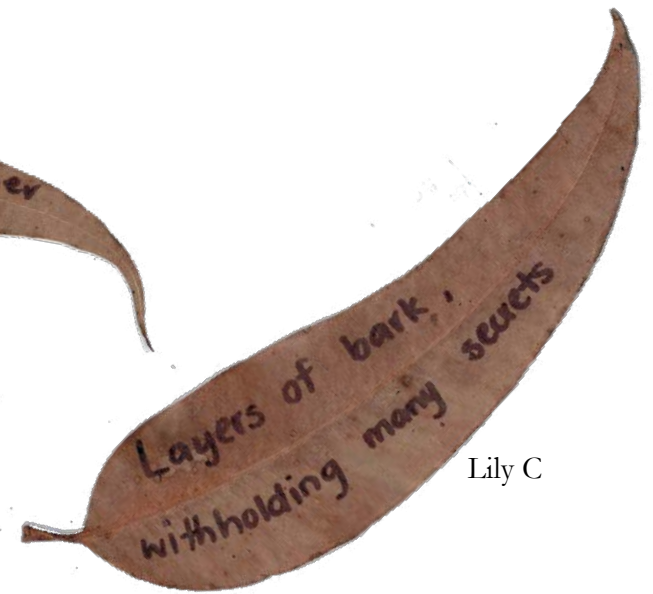
Pillars of the earth, wholesome, strong,
Age is old and days are long.
What are we? Mere mortals to judge
the land, we, but a moment in nature's
hand? Hold your head high as you
journey on. Age is old and days are long.



Jesse



Stef



Lily C

Share your secrets
by Stefani G

following no footsteps, I walked
along a sacred bushtrack.
The majestic tall tree stands strong and firmly
planted into the ground.
As each leaf falls,
day by day the tree grows more
and more.
This steady, unafraid tree is much
more than it seems.
It's not just any old tree,
It's an eucalypt tree.
Tell and share all your secrets with
this rare tree as it will not share.



Scars
by Leah S

Standing tall and strong,
The scribbly hum with marks of the beginning of life.
The scribbles like scars.
Sunlight hits the crescent leaves
Swaying, swooshing, rattling with the morning air.

Untitled
Anon

Shadows swamp the undergrowth like a blanket,
Cast by the looming figures of the eucalypt trees

Strong tall, centuries of the bushland, bleeding
From cuts and wounds, recognition of a hard life

Oaken syrup, hidden behind the rough covering,
Of grey flakes, protecting the yellow life-blood

Leaves curling like fingers, grabbing the rays of sunlight
That splash between the canopy

Dashes of bright colour as the fruit is born,
A technicolour festival of life

And still the eucalypts stand tall,
Forever looking over the Australian bush.



Group poem
"Thirteen ways of
looking at a Eucalypt"

Ellie G

a mighty bloodwood,
stands short not less.

Tall and mighty
strong, but not forever
standing.

Gabrielle

Jack S

The leaves reaching for
freedom by the roots who
restricted them down

Rough, Dead leaf Bland and dry.
Lifeless one the ground.

A forest giant
Prone
Broken fingers reaching into greenness

bark being shed, renewed from the
scars of the past. the fallen
bark are the scars that
don't go away but stay.

Blake H

bulbs of light with
feather like shades,
hanging from the
rugged branches

Jade

You have many secrets bleeding from my
Each scar/scratch shares stories from yours

Bella

Their differences are many.
but they survive, alone, together.

William J.F

Silent Death
Emma F

- Suffocating desires wrapped around the
reaching fingers attempting to latch
on freedom that was once there
- life lines burying deeper into the ground,
already creating its own grave
- A whispering breath roaring across its
hair, threatening to tear us from its place.
- families intertwined hands holding onto
to each other, the same posture once ancient
a scream of a chainsaw
a breath of a human
a silent death of our home
of our world



Untitled
Anon

Frosty, crisp air cutting through
the leaves of the gums.

Branches, silently, softly swaying
in time with the wind

Nothing but the sound of a
small finch calling from a distance

Nothing but the sound of nature.

Beauty
Anon

Life, trees, beauty.
The strong smell of eucalyptus.
The sight of the spotty or squiggly.
The sound of wind, brushing through leaves.
The feel of sharp leaves and tough bark.
But with life comes death.
Fallen,
Resting,
Going,
Gone.

Aging
Jack S

The leaves are reaching for freedom
Restricted by the roots who hold them down
Falling down as the gentle touch of the
wind catches
Sun shining, bouncing from 1 leaf to another
The rough bark peeling from the tough
exterior of the weathered skin of the tree.

Untitled
Isabella B

you are sick, every tree around you is sprouting with youth,
but you are slowly dying. Your wrinkles like
bark and tears like sap display the pain you
still feel from others passing. 7 small sprouts grow
around you and you can't help but feel useless
to them now. Mossy memories made are seen
in your home, the forest where you belong. It's
sad to see you grow old, this disease is now you
but everyone changes it's just what we do.

Untitled
Ellie G

one tree, rough and smooth, one tree -
paradoxical madness;

upwards and outwards, escaping the
confines of the rougher bark, extending,
upwards and outwards,
towards smoothness and clarity
as she grows older and wiser;
for she has seen the wrong-doings
of man since
discovery of sin.

The way of a Mighty Life
Caitlin M

Fresh crisp air, leaves swaying in time with the wind.
It is as though they are creating their own beautiful
rushing orchestra.
Layers upon layers of bark, braches, over hang
the forest floor below. The thought to touch the
mighty trunk is a gift in itself.
Unusual one would think as you stroke the smooth
silky bark. This fills you with surprise as by the way
the buldges you would feel roughness.
Mighty old tree creating a home for man.
Wise old tree standing as tough as ever, holding
many years of life.

Untitled
Kayli S

Flowing, swaying in the summer breeze,
strong, stable just like me

leaves fall into piles,
and turn into dirt...

The rigged branches all reach out,
the birds sing call and shout.

But all around nature is here,
whether it is far or near...

falling bark leaves dust behind,
But that's okay we don't mind....

Green leaves swaying...
bark is falling...

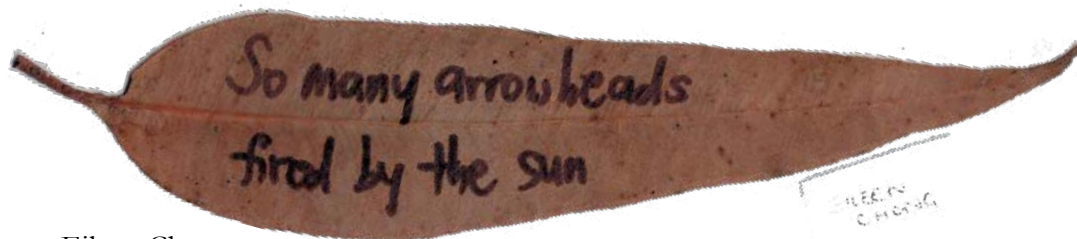
were getting old but that's okay...
look at what we've done to save today

Untitled
Gabrielle C

Twisting, bending, curving ever so gracefully
making its way towards the sky
escaping the poisonous clutches of the earth.

Colour of many hues. Leaves of different texture
always rising, coarse or smooth strong or
weak but all necessary for life.

Breathing in fresh air, an aura of wisdom,
agelessness, timelessness. Yet all taken for
granted.



Eileen Chong

Emma F

Alyssa

They stand tall for everyone
to see, quietly waiting for rain.

the tops abt, touched by the beauty of
Guarded roots, cursed by the breath of humans.

Amy F

The bright sun shining, through
the long leaves.

tree can go from something so small
nothing so big, and magnificent.
- Faith 2018

Faith

Layers upon layers over crowding bark
Sap oozing through the gaps
Peering out, waiting for the dim light
of the winter sun.

Caitlin

THE DARK GRIP, hidden behind the rough covering
OF GREY FLAKES, protecting the yellow life-blood

Oliver W

JUST A TREE IN A FIELD
OR IS THERE MORE TO BE REVEALED
- LACHLAN

Lachlan

New Shoots: poems inspired by plants



New Shoots poet-in-residence

Eileen Chong is a Singaporean poet, now living Sydney, Australia. *Burning Rice* (Australian Poetry, 2012) was shortlisted for the Anne Elder Award, Australian Arts in Asia Award and the Prime Minister's Literary Award. Her other books are *Peony* (Pitt Street Poetry, 2014) and *Painting Red Orchids* (Pitt Street Poetry, 2016).



The Red Room Company's vision is to make poetry a meaningful part of everyday life. We create poetic arts 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.

Established in 1993 Bundanon Trust supports arts practice and engagement with the arts through its residency, education, exhibition and performance programs. In preserving the natural and cultural heritage of its site Bundanon promotes the value of landscape in all our lives.

The Bjarne K Dahl Trust focuses on eucalypts, an Australian icon and a significant aspect of Australia's natural environment and biodiversity. We envisage a public inspired by and appreciative of eucalypts.

Bomaderry High School is a modern country comprehensive high school on the south coast of NSW near Nowra serving the educational needs of students living in the Bomaderry, Berry, Shoalhaven Heads, Cambewarra and Kangaroo Valley areas.

Find our more about their Eucalyptus Eco Poetry Project redroomcompany.org/education/projects/bomaderry-high-school/



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