



Moss Vale High School, 2014 ***The Disappearing with Anna Westbrook***

On Friday 7th November, writer and poet Dr. Anna Westbrook joined The Red Room Company to run an intensive poetry writing workshop with students from Camden, Crookwell and Moss Vale High Schools. Using activities inspired by *The Disappearing* learning resource, Anna helped students explore different poetic possibilities, such as prose poems, group poems, kuli stones and collage poems.

[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.

[Red Room Poetry Education at Moss Vale High School, 2014](#)

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**Prose Poem
by Georgia M.**

My head is a symphony of hallways and rooms. Getting lost is the easiest task to accomplish. Intertwining corridors leading to the thoughts that should be locked away, to be released only by the push of a big red button. The feelings litter the floors, I have yet to place them in a room all their own, they grab you as you turn the corner, scratching around your ankles, begging to be back in the lime light. They used to cover the halls, littering the floor like a sheet over old furniture, but slowly there are less and less, they disappear in puffs of smoke and slowly leave the confines of my mind. I feel their absence like a huge weight off my shoulders. Their no longer lingering presence lets me see, see how beautiful the world is around me, I hear the birds sing and taste the sweetness of the love all around me. My mind is a palace now they have left.

**Prose Poem
by Bri H.**

Over the grassy hills is a world never seen before. A world hidden in tranquillity from civilisation. A world where the endless blue sky meets the mountainous horizon. A river flows through the valley, twisting between the mountain-bases, disappearing as it winds itself around the hope of those whom have not seen, or been. Here, is a moment, too perfect to be ruined by melancholy, or the thoughts of that which doesn't matter. To see the snow come to a rest on the peaks is a rare and true gift to those that do not seek. When the snow melts, it starts its inevitable journey, carried by the gentle river, disappearing into a world of sweet oblivion, where civilisation dominates, where the human is the friend, not enemy. And here it will reach to its final destination, to be unappreciated by the friend who takes so greedily.

**Anorexia
by Sam D.**

Cold bricks, jagged against my spine. Silence screams with hatred and demands from everywhere I look. My eyes stare into charcoal depths; sightless, fearful, lost. The beating heart I used to hold is but an ashen shell. No longer recognisable as my own, my skeleton shakes, freezes and burns. Perhaps there was no strength to start with, and freedom was a deception, liked a mangled rat dangling before a mongrel mutt.

Bars of iron and steel rush around me, and a mouldy, damp wind clamps clammy fingers of burning ice around my withering soul. I cannot own this body, my heart is barely there, and all that I can feel is lost. What prison cell is this? What torturous trap has wedged its hungry jaws around my life? My skin is taught, my body starved, but this I do not know, for slowly I have lost my mind, my heart, my soul.

There is no safety, even fear has fled. And death gnaws at the bones. A carcass screams in agony. Mine? I cannot tell. I am lost in oblivion. I am disappearing. Cold bricks, jagged against my spine are eating me alive.

**Prose Poem
by Matt C.**

Michael disappears, I am brought back. I feel the dread of what he had done. Confusion. It always happens when I come back. And I like being me, but every one likes Michael. More and more Michael takes my friends, my school, my life. I am left at home while he does the fun, the dangerous, the stupid and disappears when the blame comes. Betrayed: He used to help me, get friends, speak in class but now he has taken my life. The phone rings and I feel him returning to take the call and I can do nothing but disappear.

**Prose Poem
by Gabby M.**

The mind ... a man's last sanctuary. The place of thought the place of emotion. I see my breath.

**Prose Poem
by Catherine E.**

Where did they go? Everyone disappeared from the playground. Everything in place except the blood that drowns the grass? What did they do? Rotten sandwiches in colourful lunchboxes stain the air. The sizzling monkey bars shine from the police tape. Mothers and fathers across the line with desperate tears in their eyes. No clue but blood leaves the teacher distraught. "I don't know what happened," she thought. They still hear the laughs, as if they were real and the swings sway in the distance.

**Prose Poem
by Charlotte F.**

Sitting on a bench at school, I am nothing. Just more particles floating in the thick air that restricts me. I can't move, but I am free, I see nothing yet I see all but no one sees me. I am nothing. The nothing that flies through the breeze, the nothing you feel around you. I'm slowly disappearing like the orange sunset, only I won't return. Like the moon, always sleeping. All of me left on this Earth, to be forever remembered or forever forgotten.

**Prose Poem
by Matthew P.**

Who am I? Am I the person of a disappearing act? Why am I the person who receives all the abuse, the mocking, the teasing. Why does my heart fill with a sorrow of life? This is who I am. A shattered hinge on an abandoned house. But I can overcome these things, they are just words from those who live to tease and mock. But words from a writer are what I'm worried about.

**Prose Poem
by Gabrielle H.**

Moss Vale, a cold and lonely place. Wind blows through my autumn like hair. This place smells of nothing but fallen rain and disappointment. As the days pass by, so do my friends. One by one, everyone slowly disappears, and after a while, all I'm left with is my pain and regret. Why do I stay in this place? The wind blows like a hurricane, and my things go flying behind me. I turn, and suddenly it's like the world is new. There he is, smelling of expensive cologne, his dirty blonde hair flowing gracefully in the wind.

**Prose Poem
by Laura M.**

A brilliant layer of green surrounded me everywhere I looked. The foliage above me seemed so gentle, so still, and yet so full of untold secrets. I lifted my arm and latched onto a branch, pulling myself higher and higher into the spectacular array of leaves before me. As I climbed, I felt the whispers of the wind gently brush my hair, whipping it around in every direction. The thick branches of the tree were the gnarly limbs of a monster, his hundreds of jagged arms reaching out to devour me, but I managed to duck out of reach every time, and vanish into the great blanket of leaves around me. I was in a world of my own, a world where I could be myself and travel to a land of my imagination.

**Prose Poem
by Brock S.**

When you think of a coin you think of the imperfect of the perfect. But what I did find was a coin with a punctured hole in it. Remember that everything is not simple or utterly perfect.

**Prose Poem
by Ellie T.**

The pine trees full of life shadowed her unhappiness. The smell of the pines reminded her that she was close. She felt swords jabbing into her skin, she leaped, scared of the unknown. Her memories are the jolt in her life that kept her going. The want in the wind moved her on. Her footsteps are a sign that she has moved far but gone nowhere.

**Prose Poem
by Kooper S.**

Dust flying, legs racing, I can't escape it. It's chasing me, getting faster and faster. It's catching up! Left turn, right turn, up, down, I cannot fool it, it knows this place more than I know myself. Hear beat quickens, I go faster. -It all stops- Trying to look around, it's nothing but open air, just a field, what was I running from? I've lost myself.



Poet Bio

Anna Westbrook's debut novel, *The Quiet Noise*, will be published by Scribe in 2015. Anna completed a PhD at the University of New South Wales and lectures in creative writing at New York University Sydney. Her poems have been published in the USA, France, and Australia. She is one of the poets commissioned as part of The Red Room Company's project, *The Disappearing*.

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.

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