



POETRY IN FIRST LANGUAGES DHARAWAL

with Kirli Saunders & Aunty Jodi Edwards

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.

Poetry in First Languages

Developed by Gunai poet Kirli Saunders and delivered by Red Room Poetry, Poetry in First Languages celebrates, shares and preserves knowledge of First Nations languages and culture through poetry, music and art. The project seeks to support students to create poetry in First Languages by connecting them to First Nations Poets, Elders and Language Custodians on country through poetic workshops. The underpinning focus is to strengthen the connection of First Nations students to country, language and community in order to empower them to feel pride in their cultural identities.

Kirli Saunders - Poet

Kirli Saunders is a proud Gunai woman with ties to the Yuin, Gundungurra, Gadigal and Biripi people. Kirli is the Manager of Poetic Learning and Aboriginal Cultural Liaison at Red Room Poetry. She was awarded 'Worker of the Year 2017' at the NAIDOC awards in the Illawarra/ Shoalhaven region. Kirli founded the Poetry in First Languages project. Her first children's picture book *The Incredible Freedom Machines*, illustrated by Matt Ottley has been selected for Bologna Book Fair 2018. Her second picture book *Our Dreaming* will be released by Scholastic in 2019.

Jodi Edwards - Custodian

Jodi Edwards is a proud Yuin woman with ties to Dharawal country. Jodi is an Aboriginal Studies teacher, she has a Masters in Language Education, Aboriginal Languages (USYD) and a PHD in Traditional Aboriginal Pedagogies (UOW). She is the Founder of Warrandjah: Weaving the Past into the Future, where she provided Cultural Tours, Environmental tours, Aboriginal connectivity, Leadership programs, and Education support in the Illawarra Area.



Dharawal Tree

By Preston (Y5/6)

the gundu is like a strong guard,
protecting its nguru
the nguru sifts
through your maramal
like widjud widjud

my gundu talks to me
through its guninda
as it gali-ga and yangga-na
as the gurgama goes by

~

the tree is like a strong guard,
protecting its land,
the earth sifts
through your fingers
like sand

my tree talks to me
through its bark
as it dances and sings
as the wind goes by

The old man's stories

By Chris (Y4)

green, silent, safe
I sit with an ancient hunter
the gundu is a protector
he knows the nguru stories

~

green, silent, safe
I sit with an ancient hunter
the tree is a protector
he knows the earths stories



language lesson

By Jack (Y5)

familiar, calming, open
it is so beautiful, like the
wirritjiribin in the gundu
gum gundu-lali which are the colours
of a whole celery
the gundu-lali are heart warming
like your dog jumping up on you

~

familiar, calming, open
it is so beautiful, like the
lyre birds in the trees
gum trees are the colours
of a whole celery
the trees are heart warming
like your dog jumping up on you



Tree Spirit

By Chloe (Y6)

calm, soft, brightening,
the people here are never fully
dressed without a smile
the midjang and banda grow taller and taller
while the gundu is proud.
the gundu-lali watches over me
through the good and the bad.

~

calm, soft, brightening,
the people here are never fully
dressed without a smile
the girls and boys grow taller and taller
while the tree is proud.
the trees watches over me
through the good and the bad.

My Dharawal Poem

By Brock (Y6)

this is Bargo:
selfless, calm.
gundu-lali that erase
negative thoughts away
as fast as a lightning bolt.
the nadjun is clearer
than glass
our land, full of nguru.
our humble town will
welcome you
with open arms.
the gundu will hug you
like a babaa

~

this is Bargo:
selfless, calm,
tress that erase
negative thoughts away
as fast as a lightning bolt.
the water is clearer
than glass
our land, full of nature
our humble town will
welcome you
with open arms.
the trees will hug you
like a father



My Poem

By Riley (Y6)

calm
just like the gundu-lali,
swaying side to side.
Dharawal nguru is familiar,
like family.
the nguru sings to you
and tells you stories.

~

calm,
just like the tress,
swaying side to side.
Dharawal country is familiar,
like family.
the tree sings to you
and tells you stories.



Dharawal Nguru

By Lachlan (Y5/6)

dharawal nguru is flourishing
and colourful like a beautiful gali midjang
gundu-lali stand tall and proud up in here,
with nurunnurun rolling valleys,
the nadjun is clear, as is the sky.
the nguru wraps its arms around me
caring for me, protecting me.

~

dharawal country is flourishing
and colourful like a beautiful dancing girl
trees stand tall and proud up in here,
with green rolling valleys,
the water is clear, as is the sky.
the earth wraps its arms around me
caring for me, protecting me

Dharawal Land

By Shakira

the widjud widjud fits in
between the gaps of your toes
and slips up and runs over
your two bare feet
the gurabang flicking up on your shoes
like running through a gurabang patch
the group of gundu-lali are like a tribe
gali-yi
around the ganbi

~

the sand fits in
between the gaps of your toes
and slips up and runs over
your two bare feet
the dirt flicking up on your shoes
like running through a dirt patch
the group of trees are like a tribe dancing
around the fire



Bargo

By Jordan (Y4/5)

peaceful, silent, safe
my negative thoughts drift away from me
the gurgama bangawan yiwinj blows on me,
I wish I could see what the bangawan yuwinj
looked like
or even hear stories from the Dreaming.
It feels like bangawan yuwinj yangga-na to me
and
tells me stories

peaceful, silent, safe
my negative thoughts drift away from me
the wind of the elders blows on me,
I wish I could see what the old men looked like
or even hear stories from the Dreaming.
it feels like old man sing to me and
tells me stories



Life Poem

By Ben (Y3)

safe, strong and shaded
the gundu is an old bangawan
it gives me solitude
when I enter my Ngabu house I see
brown bricks, red gurabang and nurin nurin
Nganu, baaba, ngala in the lounge room,
always durjar
we play hide and seek,
I love Ngabu's nundur bangawan

~

safe, strong and shaded
the tree is an old wise man
it gives me solitude
when I enter my Nan's house I see
brown bricks, red dirt and green
Nan and father, sitting in the lounge room,
always growing
we play hide and seek,
I love Grandmother's old home

Untitled

By Kaleb

I feel peaceful
I nhama the Nowra yaribiimba
flying through the gundu-lali
when I enter my Ngabu house
I ngaa the flowers and
the colourful birong butterflies
Ngabu yirima looks after me

~

I feel peaceful
I watch the Nowra cockatoo
flying through the trees
when I enter my Nan's house
I see the flowers and
the colourful beautiful butterflies
Grandmother's spirit looks after me

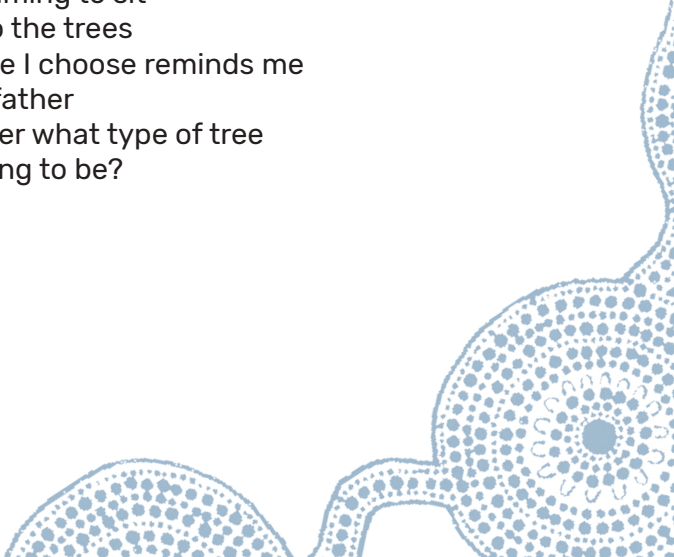
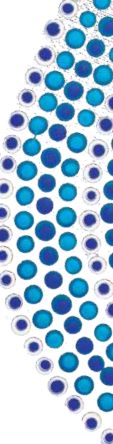
Gundu-lali

By Jhett (Y5)

the gundu-lali are our yirma
our family
they will always be there for me
it is calming to ngala
next to the gundu-lali
the gundu I choose reminds me
of my babaa
I wonder what type of gundu
I'm going to be?

~

the trees are our ancestors,
our family
they will always be there for me
it is calming to sit
next to the trees
the tree I choose reminds me
of my father
I wonder what type of tree
I'm going to be?





Dharawal land

By Sakari (Y5)

calm, dusty, and windy
my gundu is calming
it is like two best friends
ngala-yi and talking
about the past
this nguru is like my djadja
he takes care of me,
watches over me,
and welcomes me
to my new nguru

~

calm, dusty, and windy
my tree is calming
it is like two best friends
siting and talking
about the past
this land is like my brother
he takes care of me,
watches over me,
and welcomes me
to my new land

Dharawal land

By Evie (Y3)

red, connected, calm,
this is nguru is as calm as a song
the gundu has guninda like
a diamond pythons skin
on this nguru the gundu-lali
watch over you

~

red, connected, calm,
this is land is as calm as a song
the tree has bark like
a diamond pythons skin
on this land the trees
watch over you



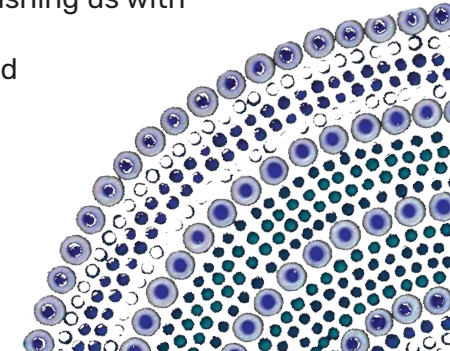
the beautiful and the sad

By Charlotte (Y6)

the gundu is peaceful like
gugara yangga-na-lai in a gayan meadow
the gundu-lali here to protect
all the gurabung-lali and nuguru patches,
the friendly waran-lali and
the beautiful animals,
that's what makes my nguru
the distressed nguru washing us with
its tears
the peoples use the nguru
as a rubbish bin

~

the tree is peaceful like
kookaburra singing in a big meadow.
the trees here to protect
all the rocks and dirt patches,
the friendly children and
the beautiful animals.
that's what makes my country.
the distressed earth washing us with
its tears
the peoples use the land
as a rubbish bin.





Our Nguru

By Harmonee (Y5)

calm, connected, silent
it is like a calming peaceful nguru,
my gundu is a calm
best friend
the nguru is peaceful
you can hear the budjan chirping
the gundu is like my pop
connecting to me and
always watching over me

~

calm, connected, silent
it is like a calming peaceful land,
my tree is a calm
best friend
the land is peaceful
you can hear the birds chirping
the tree is like my pop
connecting to me and
always watching over me

Dharawal land

By Mici (Y6)

calming, rigid, simple
ngala-yi next to the gundu
was like ngala-yi next to a
memory in time

the girgama blowing through my hair,
bimbirr sliding through my fingertips,
ngala-yi on a hill
with nothing but my thoughts

my gundu may ngala still but
nilgung gali, nilgung gali together
swaying in the yilma.
no need to worry.

~

calming, rigid, simple
sitting next to the tree
was like sitting next to a
memory in time

the wind blowing through my hair,
grass sliding through my fingertips,
sitting on a hill
with nothing but my thoughts

my tree may sit still but
we dance, we dance together
swaying in the breeze.
no need to worry.



gundu-lali

By Ivy (Y4)

beautiful, connected, bright
the gundu is arched like a bridge
when the leaves fall from the gurgama
and drop on your feet,
it feels like a spider tip-toeing
my gundu dharraa strong
even after falling

~

beautiful, connected, bright
the tree is arched like a bridge
when the leaves fall from the wind
and drop on your feet,
it feels like a spider tip-toeing
my tree stands strong
even after falling