



# Unlocked Balund-a 2018

with Lionel Fogarty & Joe Geia

## 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.

## Balund-a

The Balund-a Program is an innovative residential diversionary program for male offenders over 18 years of age. Located at Tabulam, within the Bundjalung Nation, the program's aim is to reduce re-offending and enhance skills within a cultural and supportive community environment. The Aboriginal name, Bugilmah Burube Wullinje Balund-a roughly translates as "Be good now you have a second chance down by the river".

## Lionel Fogarty

A Murri man, Lionel is a leading spokesman for Indigenous rights in Australia, particularly deaths in custody following the death of his brother, Daniel Yock, in 1993. His poetry expresses the need for innovation and urgency. In doing so, it is sometimes surreal, sometimes confronting and includes large amounts of Bandjalang dialect and vernacular.

Lionel Fogarty was born on Wakka Wakka land at Barambah, now known as Cherbourg Aboriginal Reserve near Murgon, Queensland. His traditional background is the Yoogum and Kudjela tribes and he has relations from the Goomba tribe.

In the early 1970s Fogarty became actively involved in Aboriginal politics after a realisation of the injustices experienced while growing up on the Reserve. His involvement in the political struggles of the Aboriginal people has been through various organisations including the Aboriginal Legal Service, Aboriginal Housing Service, Black Resource Centre, Black Community School and Murrie Coo-ee. As a legal and political activist, and as a community leader, his work has also been directed towards the reality of Aboriginal deaths in custody.

## Joe Geia

Joe Geia is an Australian musician of Murri Aboriginal heritage from North Queensland. He is best known as the composer of the song "Yil Lull", which has been recorded by many other artists including Paul Kelly, Archie Roach, Jimmy Barnes, and most recently by the Singers for the Red, Black and Gold, which included Christine Anu, Renée Geyer, Tiddas, Paul Kelly, and Shane Howard.

**Because of You**  
**Balund-a 2018 song**

Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can

On the darkest night you are my light  
Because of you I am a proud black man  
Able to walk our land  
My culture is strong  
Proud black man

Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can

I'm a white man and have a second chance  
Thanks to the Bundjalung

Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can

Who are they to call us bad?  
Why do we let them make us mad?

Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can

Bugalbeh Balund-a  
Because of her I'm free  
Jingiwalla

Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can

Because of them I'm a dad  
Because of them I'm so happy  
Because of them I'm alive  
Because of them I'm stronger

Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can

But for now I'm just  
Another man from Bligh Park

Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can

Because of the Elders I get a second chance

Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can  
Because of you I can

I knew this would be the one  
Will you be there? Only time will tell  
Black Red Gold are the colours of my life

Jingiwalla – bugal

Balund-a -----One Love  
Let's get together and feel alright  
Balund-a -----a second chance  
Give thanks to the Warhlubal tribe  
'Cause we're on their land

Let's get together and feel alright  
Give thanks to the Warhlubal tribe  
'Cause we're on their land  
REPEAT

\*Bugalbeh - 'very good' (used in greeting)

\*Jingiwalla - 'welcome'

\*Warhlubal tribe - west Bundjalung Indigenous community

## **Because of You I Am – to the Elders**

*By Adam*

having a second chance was something  
that I took for granted

the normal for me

Doing this and that was  
Bettering myself was a dream  
a dream that I was never going to accomplish  
You give me hope, you made me believe, believe  
not only in myself but believe that my life can be better  
Cance after chance you gave me and I took each one  
without another thought

Because of you I can be a  
Better man;  
Because of you I am a better man  
Because of Balund-a I am

## **Because of Them**

*By Josiah*

Because of them I'm a Dad  
Because of them I can change  
Because of them I can be a good role model  
Because of them I'm so happy  
Because of them I'm alive  
Because of them I'm stronger

## **COZ OF HER**

*By Linden*

Coz of her I can  
Coz of her I'm alive  
Coz of her I have love  
Coz of me I'm here  
Coz of me she is sad  
Coz of here I'm good  
Coz of then they think I'm bad

## **Because of You I Can**

*By Adam*

Jingiwalla bugal  
On the darkest night you are my light  
Because of you I am a proud black man  
Able to walk our land  
My culture is strong but yet we still fight  
For our brothers and sisters who struggle

Because of you I can – proud black man  
When I fall and stumble you are there  
To pick me up, when I'm drowning  
You are the rock that I hold to pull  
Me up, you are my world, my everything  
Because of you I am a proud black man

\*Jingiwalla - 'welcome'

\*Bugal - 'good'

### **Because of Her I Can (1)**

*By Adam*

Because of her I can believe that I am  
Worth all the trouble that I have gone through  
I can hold her, I can smell her hair, I can see  
What she sees, I can dream again, I can be me  
Again and it's all because of her, I can

### **Because of Her I Can (2)**

*By Adam*

On the darkest night you are my light  
In the lowest time of my life you are my strength  
When I fall and stumble you are there to pick me up  
When I'm drowning in pain you are my rock that I  
Hold to pull me up, you are my world, my everything  
Because of you I can be a better man

### **Because of Her I Can (3)**

*By Adam*

Because of her I can breathe again  
Because of her I can hope and dream again  
Because of her I can finally open  
My eyes and see what has always  
Been right in front of me  
Because of her I can be what I was  
Born to be; a proud black man  
Because of her I can believe that  
I'm worth all the trouble and heartache  
Because of her I am who I am  
I love because I can

### **Because of Her I Can (4)**

*By Adam*

My head down feeling sorry for myself  
Tears flowing like a river not wanting to stop  
The hate – the anger – the pain – the blame  
It is at everyone but the one it should be  
Hours become days, the days become weeks  
Weeks become months and months turn into years  
Finally it comes time to go home, I'm scared  
That they will not see that I am now a better man  
A proud black man, the man I always was  
The man that I hid  
Because of her, I can be everything, because of you  
Julie Perry, I am everything, not just a proud man,  
But a proud black man  
Because of her  
I don't count the days, I make the days count  
Because of  
You I am

### **Stolen**

*By Jason*

STOLEN by the Government  
Taken from family, her mob  
All siblings put in an orphanage  
Beaten for talking her native tongue  
Mouth washed out with soap  
Why? Because she was half white  
Or half black – lost between two worlds  
Lost her identity  
Where do I fit in?  
Who am I? Black or white  
but I'm proud to be black  
With my people

## **IT**

*By Tony*

Because of IT I have lost so much in life  
Because of IT I am sitting where I am today  
Because of IT I have lost my job  
And lost a lot of respect from my family mem-  
bers  
But because of where I am today  
I am starting to earn that respect back

## **LIFE**

*By Stephen*

I am an Aboriginal and I'm proud of my colour  
Since I've been in Balund-a I've been thinking of my mother  
I've been doing programs to get my certificates  
And it's making me smarter  
When I go back to the community I can go to work and  
Be there for my partner  
So when I was younger I was always with my father  
But I knew he was always my barber  
So I'd like to thank my family and siblings for being  
There for me when I was down  
But I knew they was always around  
As time goes by  
I was always a family guy  
Since being at Balund-a I get along with all the fellas  
They made me stronger and do the things I can  
So when I the program I can stand up  
And do the thing like a man

## **Let Us Be Free**

*By Scott*

This is where we all wouldlike  
To be. Hope and pray one day  
The day will come for you and me  
Here I sit – hope and pray for one  
Day to be free. My heart grows  
Hard as I see my brother  
Fall – not knowing what to  
Do as I can see a day  
Where we will be as one  
On this day we will all be free  
My hand is out  
For all my brothers  
My heart breaks to see one of  
Us fall. Stand as one and  
We will be free

## **Man from Bligh Park**

*By Matthew*

Bligh Park is where I live  
I feel left in the dark  
Society has left a mark  
Sometimes I just feel like saying  
Fuck – I find myself in the park  
Sitting alone in the dark  
I wonder what mark  
I can leave in society  
Bur for now I'm just another  
Man from Bligh Park

## **Thankful To Be Here**

*By Trevor*

I'm thankful to be here today  
I've lived a life of drugs and crime  
I'm a white man and thought this was my land  
I've never been racist but just thought I had the right  
I went to school just here at Tabulam  
And mixed with white and black  
But just thought that I had the right  
All my life has been full of drugs  
And crime but I just thought that I had the right  
Which brings me to now  
I'm thankful to be here today  
Now learning and getting another chance  
Not from my people, the white man  
But yes, the Elders, the black man and woman

## **The Fun of Art**

*By Linton*

The art I done was fun  
I had a chance to let the pen run  
As soon as I begun  
I knew this would be the one  
As the picture grew  
The time flew  
Before I knew it  
I was done

## **RollerCoaster**

*By Jason*

On my path – keep hitting  
Roundabouts  
Going round and round  
Going over the same old ground  
Don't know where to turn  
My head is spinning  
Loosing my mind  
Where am I ?  
Where have I been  
All these years? Lost my friends  
Family telling me to  
Get off that rollercoaster ride  
I listened, and now I have a second chance  
Make the most of what I have left  
Put family first  
Take the right turn  
Get my life back  
My family and love  
Get off that rollercoaster ride  
And live life – family first

## **The Poem**

*By Linton*

The poem I write  
Will sound alright  
Whether the words are said or read  
It will still be bright

The poem I write will  
Be finished before bed  
So don't be misled  
The screws won't get in the way  
Of this in your head  
Even if it takes all night  
The poem will be wrote  
As of now  
This is the poem I wrote  
Amanda

## **In and Out**

*By Troy*

In and Out  
Up and Down  
Where am I now?  
Hope 4 2 chance in life  
4 my little  
One and me