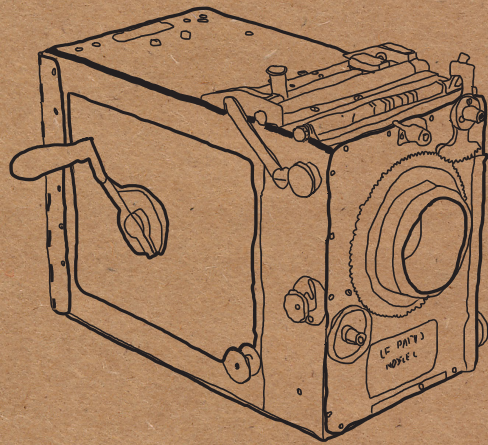


Red  
Room  
Poetry

Poetry in  
Meaningful Ways



# POETRY OBJECT

2017

# INDIGENOUS STORYTELLING POETRY WORKSHOP

WITH POET KIRLI SAUNDERS

# CONTENTS

## INFORMATION PACK 3

- About *Red Room Poetry Object* 3
- How To Get Involved 3

## WORKSHOP LEARNING RESOURCE 4

- Commissioned Poems 5
- Choosing your object 10

## WORKSHOP HANDOUTS 11

- Draw your object 11
- 6 word stories 12
- Collaborative poem 13
- Poetry Object* Poem Template 14



## ABOUT RED ROOM POETRY

*Red Room Poetry's* vision is to make poetry a meaningful part of everyday life. By encouraging curiosity, creation and participation across a range of forms and mediums including radio, live performance, installation and digital initiatives, we enrich engagement with poetry. Since 2003, our poetic arts projects and learning programs have provided creative opportunities for more than 780 poets and over 22,500 students across Australia and beyond our shores.

## ABOUT RED ROOM POETIC LEARNING

*Red Room Poetic Learning* unlocks meaningful engagements with poetry for students, teachers and school communities. Breathing life into traditional poetry teaching practices, *Poetic Learning* brings contemporary poets into classrooms across the country to foster fresh poetic perspectives. From page to stage and screen, *Poetic Learning* supports creative investigations and enriched curriculum outcomes. Each *Red Room Poetry* workshop encourages new modes of publication, releasing student poems to an authentic worldwide audience of more than 240, 000 online readers.

# ABOUT RED ROOM POETRY OBJECT

Inside the cure there's the hope  
Inside the hope there's a smile  
Inside the smile there's the child

'CROCODILE TOOTH NECKLACE'

Winning Primary Poem by Niamh D.

*Red Room Poetry Object* is a free poetry competition for students and teachers across Australia and New Zealand. Since 2011, *Poetry Object* has invited young poets (Years 3-10) and their teachers to write poems inspired by special and curious objects.

The competition has ignited the imaginations of over 300 school communities and published more than 10,000 original poems by students and teachers. This year we've teamed up with the National Museum of Australia and their incredible collection of objects to enrich our free teaching resources. We've also enlisted the poetic talents of Evelyn Araluen Corr (NSW), Joel McKerrow (VIC), Jeremy Balius (WA), Cameron Hindrum (TAS), Manal Younus (SA) and Anna Jacobson (QLD).

In addition to all submitted poems featuring on our online *Poetry Object* library, winning Primary, Secondary and Teacher poems will be published on public transport, as part of our *Poetic Moments* project. With support from the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund (CAL), winners will also be awarded prize packs that include mentoring by professional poets as well as digital workshops. Travel vouchers, magazine subscriptions and book pack prizes are offered thanks to our generous partners and patrons.

Thank you for joining us on a new poetic journey. We hope *Poetry Object* 2017 not only nurtures imagination and creative practice, but helps to explore the poems hidden in the inner worlds of your treasured objects.

~ *Red Room Poetry*

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

1. Have your teacher register your school on the Red Room Poetry website.
2. Explore this resource to enhance your poems and gain inspiration from poetic activities and writing prompts
3. Submit your poems for the Poetry Object Competition.



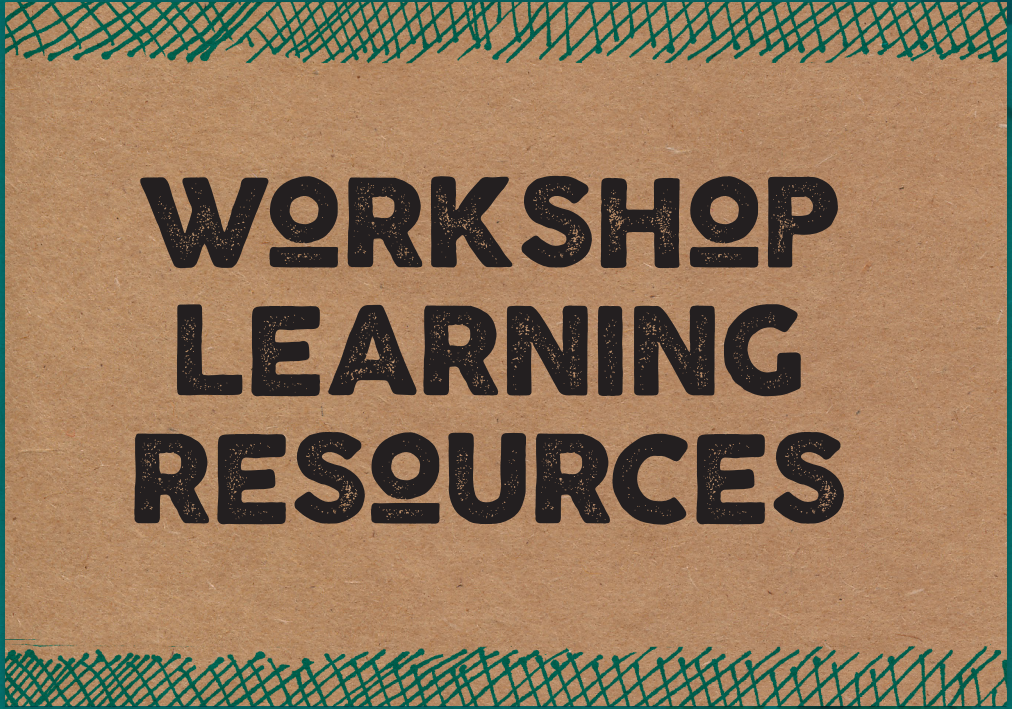
## KEY DATES

### REGISTER NOW TO ENTER

- > COMPETITION OPENS  
Thursday 20 April 2017
- > SUBMISSIONS CLOSE  
Friday 22 September 2017
- > ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS  
November 2017

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**WORKSHOP  
LEARNING  
RESOURCES**

EVELYN  
ARALUEN  
CORR



Born and raised on Dharug country, Evelyn is an exciting new voice in Australian poetry. She is a poet, educator and activist of Bundjalung descent. You can read more about Evelyn here: <http://redroomcompany.org/poet/Evelyn-Araluen/>

# POEMS BY OUR DEADLY ABORIGINAL POETS

## KI: YELLOMUNDEE

Beyond your stage  
the audience murmur  
men and women weep  
and silk their skin bare,  
for here and gone and taken.  
Held by mostly mountains now  
you wear crowns  
of returning eucalypt:

I can't see your lashes  
but feel them still soft  
like that skin they try to skin  
to wear you with words  
and all them names they reason  
and rub out.

All this might be lonely  
unmarked and highwayside  
but then the stars come here  
to shine the shape of song  
and hear you say

it's nice  
to have someone  
to talk to

## REFLECTION

*My father asked me to write about her. This place is called Yellomundee, after Yarramundi, a great man of the Boorooberongal from Dharug country, where my family have lived for many generations.*

*She's easy to miss; the council forbids the maintenance of this engraving, even though this site has been vandalised many times. The stripping bark and flailing tree limbs evoked the dramatics of public weeping for me. I experimented in finding a way to describe these surroundings; it is such an open and big sky space, but what came to me was theatre and audience. I found it difficult to balance the strength and endurance of culture with the sadness of what has been lost. I wanted to be respectful so I shared many drafts with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.*

*Like so much of our culture, she is subject to debate and disagreement. Hunting site, men's site, women's site, and then of course, what should we call her? In archaeological terms, she is K1. I wanted to use language in this poem, but we don't really use names when we visit. We take our shoes off and we listen.*

# ELLEN VAN NEERVEN

## OYSTER SHELL NECKLACE

Ellen is an award-winning Indigenous writer and young Yugambah woman. Her poetry collection *Comfort Food* was released in June 2016. Read more about Ellen here: <http://redroomcompany.org/poet/ellen-van-neerven/>

### OYSTER SHELL NECKLACE

I didn't fill the bay  
or make the rocks  
I didn't.

Hear Tassie's haunted  
wasn't sure how I'd feel  
I feel.

Water in your welcome  
the clouds, the blood  
water.

All feeds all  
mud oysters, mutton birds  
all feeds.

Parting gift  
shell in your hands  
now in my hands  
on your neck  
now on my neck.

Safe travel  
with shell stringed close  
heartbeat close.

### REFLECTION

*Just as I had to wait for the shell to present itself  
as my Poetry Object,  
I also had to wait for the first line.*

*I waited until the words felt like a wave.  
Often I don't trust myself,  
and I have to move forward despite this.*

*No idea is a bad idea,  
they all progress the work.*

*So I may write a line and end up deleting it down the  
track.  
or I may revise it,  
or move it.*

*This is all part of the process.*

*Once I've got the first few lines I feel better. I know the  
poem has started. Again, I can always go back and move  
lines.*

*It's about figuring out what fits together because often  
writing a poem is about figuring out how you feel.*

*Revising is often also re-wording to fit into the language  
of the poem. each phrase has to feel like it fits together,  
and as the architect of the poem, only you will know this.*

*During the process I will read the lines out several times,  
say them, feel the musicality. It will be easy to tell if a  
word or line is out of place.*

# MATTHEW HEFFERNAN



Matthew is an Indigenous/Irish poet and rapper who was introduced to poetry through song writing and hip hop. Read more about Matthew's creative process here: <http://redroomcompany.org/blog/red-room/matthew-heffernan-creative-process->

## THE SMALL CHEST OF SAND

Aunty with her weathered hands,  
smiling face, and fettered candour  
reaches out with a gift,  
of my manifested mantra.

A small chest, with speckled seeds,  
crimson sand, and freckled beads  
Its timeless OM, this stagnant seer  
constructs my being and disintegrates  
fear.

a humble vessel, enveloped in  
scratches,  
its sturdy geometry, threaded by  
latches  
my attachment, transcends isolated  
raptures.  
Freedom, from the abattoir, of which  
I'm  
a captive.

The crimson sand's fragrance,  
fluently unassuming,  
a little solace from the conspiring  
and betrayal that is looming,  
but from the rain's rage, and sun's  
kiss,  
the unforeseen is blooming.

The genesis of a memory, for moments  
worth stealing,  
this essence that blankets, is my  
psalm while I'm kneeling,  
"thank you", the only words for the  
person it's revealing,  
my manifested mantra, I have found  
my healing.

## REFLECTION

*My process for approaching Poetry Object involved sitting down by myself with a pen and pad, a cup of tea and some music. I'm at my most creative when I am about to sleep, so I try to recreate the feeling of calm and relaxation to get into that same state. I had to think about what objects are in my life, and whether they have any significance worth writing about, this included remembering how and why those objects came into my life.*

*I ended up choosing a small box of red sand, because it was a gift I received from a friend/mentor. She had collected the red sand from my "spiritual" home of Central Australia when she had lived and worked there. I was born in Alice Springs and my mother is Indigenous (Pintupi-Luritja) to the region. In our way of understanding, we have always existed on that land, going as far back as memory can serve until it is interlaced with mythology. In addition to this, I was going through a pretty tumultuous time at work, and the gift and also my friend's constant encouragement helped me get through that. I chose to write about this object, because it means so much to me. I didn't have to force myself to find significance or words. The meaning is already there, waiting to be written about, whether that's remembering how the red sand in central Australia smells after rain, or remembering it's profound connection to who I am as an Indigenous person.*

# THE SPIRIT OF THINGS

## SOUND OF OBJECTS

### WATCH & LISTEN TO 'LONGING, WANTING'

<https://youtu.be/DI4iOmydCus>



Spear thrower from Mapoon, Cape York,  
Queensland. Donated by E.J. Bryce in 1958  
Photographer: Oliver Perkins  
Rights: © Australian Museum

#### Song Writing Prompt

Think about what your special object remembers and the music it carries within. Write a song about your object's experiences as though you were the object telling your own story.

#### LONGING, WANTING

Longing, Wanting  
My edge, a blade  
Slice through air, slice through air  
No breath, no rain  
Stay in wait and wait to fade away

Wanting, longing for  
That arm, that fingernail

My edge, a blade  
No breath, no rain  
Stay in wait and wait to fade away

Wanting, longing for  
That arm that fingernail  
Wanting, longing  
That arm that fingernail

My edge is a blade of steel  
Revered I reveal a man of pride  
I hang proud at his side  
I began again and again  
With hand, finger, nail

Etched in fine line  
Wood, tooth, sinew, shell and twine  
Combine to launch and strike  
I kill divided evermore through time  
I lie, wait and wail  
His hand, finger, nail

Wanting, longing  
That arm, that fingernail  
Wanting, longing for  
That arm, that fingernail  
longing for

*The Spirit of Things - Sound of Objects* is a research, history, arts and cultural project of Australian Museum. The Spirit of Things Collective, comprised of the musicians **Stiff Gins** (Nardi Simpson and Kaleena Briggs) and Syd Green, use their passion for culture, history and storytelling to investigate the living worlds of their chosen objects. Through musical responses to Aboriginal cultural objects, The Spirit of Things Collective sings displaced objects back to their ancestral country.

In the song **Longing, Wanting**, The Spirit of Things give a voice to the separation of a spearthrower from its ancestral home and the lasting ties between the object and the man who once used it.



# KIRLI SAUNDERS



A proud Yuin woman with ties to the Gadigal, Biripi, Dunghutti and Gundungurra people, Kirli is an emerging children's author, poet and motorcycle enthusiast. You can read more about Kirli here: <http://redroomcompany.org/poet/kirli-saunders/>

## Manx

*For my Dad, Terry,  
who taught me of life on two wheels*

Allow another to hold you now,  
tender like the hands  
mine were cut from

and homely  
like the returning  
of your journeys.

Permit another to guard you –  
to re-gift your undying promise  
of safe passage.

And when they wrap you in leather,  
stay close to the curious heart within,

promise you'll fuel their adventures  
with a purr

just as you have mine.

## REFLECTION

*The manx cat badge is associated with the Isle of Mann TT - an annual motorcycle sport event held on the Isle of Man.*

*The particular badge pictured on the left was handed down to me from Dad. As a motorcyclist, he wore it on his leather jacket for some 20+ years, allowing this badge to journey with him all over the country.*

*For me, the manx badge is a symbol of paternal protection and adventure. It embodies my love of life on two wheels.*

*Sadly, I lost my manx badge some years ago while riding through the national park. I hope that another rider loving it now as I once did.*

 FOR STUDENTS -  
ALL STAGES

# CHOOSING YOUR SPECIAL OBJECT

let it breathe out its secrets.  
Its trace of a salty scent,  
hovering poignantly in the air.

'COWRIE SHELL'  
by Sian R.

Now that you've learned a little more about the curious and special objects of others, it's time to choose your own that will inspire your 20-line object poem.

In order to complete this task you will need to bring your special object to class on a specified date. If you do not have your talismanic object in class for the required lesson you may find it harder to complete the task.

Your object could be an old musical instrument, a stone from a far away land, a tooth, a gift given by an old friend, anything that is special just to you.

To choose your special object, look around your room or house.

What object stands out to you?

Why did it catch your attention?

How is it different to other objects in the room?

What memories does it hold?

If it could speak what would it say just to you?

Once you have selected your special object, ensure you have permission to bring it to school for the *Poetry Object* writing activities.

**I will bring my special object to school on  
the following date**

— / — / —



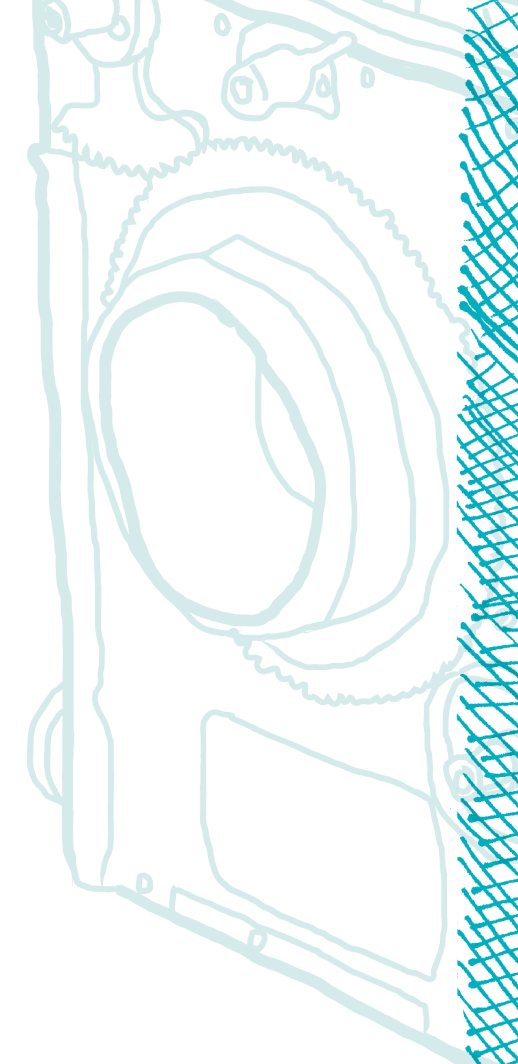
## DRAW YOUR OBJECT

As pink as the majestic sunset  
As yellow as a banana being  
eaten by a baboon

'MY COOKIE BOOK'  
Charlie K-S.

For this activity you will need a pen and a piece of paper. Clear off your desk so that you have nothing on it except for your pen, paper and your special object.

- Close your eyes and hold the object in your hands. Slowly feel its nooks, crannies and curves.
- Draw your object on the same page in as many different ways as you can.



### SUBMIT YOUR DRAWINGS

For a chance to be featured in next year's *Poetry Object* learning resource, send your drawings to [poetryobject@redroomcompany.org](mailto:poetryobject@redroomcompany.org)



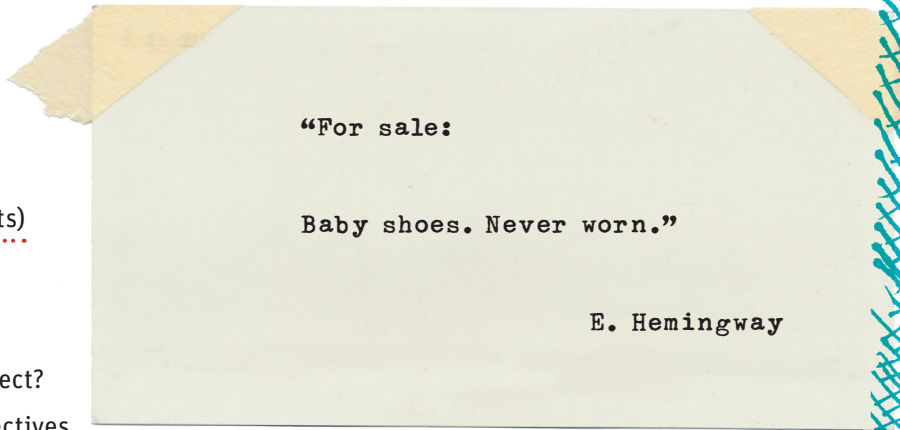
**FOR STUDENTS -**  
**(STAGE 2-5)** (K-2 Teachers can  
 scribe a collaborative list for students)

## 6 WORD STORY

Can you write a 6 word story about your object?

If you get stuck, create a list of unusual adjectives that describe your object. You can use these words in your 20 line poem later.

20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.



## EXAMPLE

Below is an example of a 6 word story about Kirli's manx cat badge:

*Manx cat,  
 well travelled,  
 sadly missed.*

Some adjectives to describe her badge would be:

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <i>hand-me-down</i> | <i>heavy</i>       |
| <i>inherited</i>    | <i>metallic</i>    |
| <i>shiny</i>        | <i>protective</i>  |
| <i>smooth</i>       | <i>adventurous</i> |
| <i>tired</i>        | <i>precious</i>    |





**FOR STUDENTS –  
(STAGE 3-5)** (K-2 Teachers can scribe  
the collaborative poem for students).

## COLLABORATIVE POEM

As a class, you're going to create a poem about ONE object by contributing a simile to a single poem. To create your simile, compare the object to something entirely different. Many similes use the words **like** or **as**.

For example:

*The teddy is black as night*

*he ring is smooth like moonlight on still water.*

### ORIGINAL AND UNUSUAL IMAGERY

You could use the starters below

As white as .....

as .....

As fragile as .....

as .....

As loud as .....

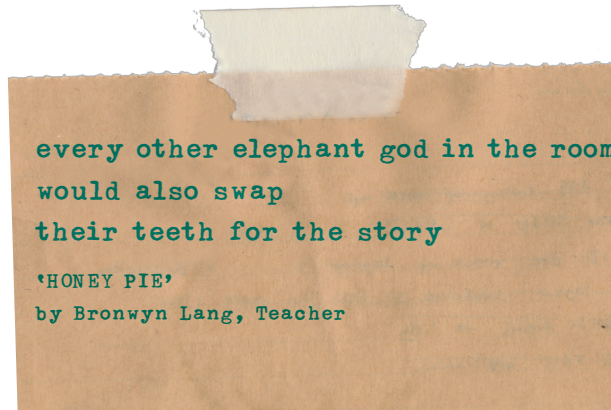
like .....

Spiky like a .....

like .....

Dry like a .....

like .....



Or you can write your own.

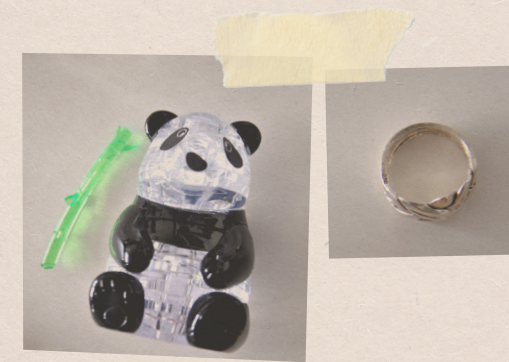
Make sure you share your favourite simile with the class to add to the group poem.



## STAGE 4-5 EXTENSION

Below are some extension options for more experienced writers:

- Compose a sentence about your object using a metaphor in place of the simile.
- Compose a line about your object that contains alliteration.
- Compose a sentence about your object that contains assonance.
- Compose a sentence about your object in which you use the device of personification.
- Compose a nine word sentence about your object. Now indicate where you might use lineation or line break to start a new line or stanza in your poem.



There are more NAPLAN-style resources available on our website.

# OBJECT POEM ACTIVITY

To enter the Poetry Object 2017 competition, your task is to compose an original poem inspired by your special object. Your poem should be no more than 20 lines in length and should incorporate some of the poetic techniques you've developed today in the workshop.

After drafting your poem, you can edit it with your teacher. You may like to do so individually or as a group.

Once your school has been registered for *Poetry Object*, check with your teacher for submission links to the **online publishing form**.

**Deadline: Friday 22 September  
5:00pm AEST**

\*All poems submitted to *Red Room Poetry Object* will be published on the *Red Room Poetry* website.

Name: ..... Title: .....

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....
9. ....
10. ....
11. ....
12. ....
13. ....
14. ....
15. ....
16. ....
17. ....
18. ....
19. ....
20. ....

# THANK YOU

## Contact Us

If you would like to discuss any aspect of *Red Room Poetry Object* or book a poetry workshop please contact:

## Red Room Poetry

Eunice Andrada

Poetry Object Producer

Office: (02) 9319 5090

Email: [poetryobject@redroomcompany.org](mailto:poetryobject@redroomcompany.org)

You can also read more about *Red Room Poetry Object* and *Red Room Poetry* via the links below:

[redroomcompany.org/projects/poetry-object/](http://redroomcompany.org/projects/poetry-object/)  
[redroomcompany.org/education](http://redroomcompany.org/education)

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national  
museum  
australia  
Kinokuniya

national  
museum  
australia

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*Red Room Poetry* would like to thank our volunteers and interns for their contributions to all things poetic. Their continued support and generosity is instrumental to us.

