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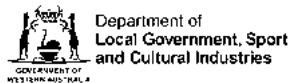
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Westerly acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Australians. We celebrate the continuous living cultures of Indigenous people and their vital contributions within Australian society.

Westerly's office, at the University of Western Australia, is located on Whadjak Noongar land. We recognise the Noongar people as the spiritual and cultural custodians of this land.



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New Writing from  
Western Australia  
Fiction  
Creative Non-Fiction  
Poetry  
Essays

# Westerly

**We are**  
Lola McDowell nee Kickett

Lola McDowell nee Kickett is a Balladong, Wadjuk yok with Irish ancestry. The third youngest of fifteen, she was born and raised in the central wheatbelt. Lola wrote poems as a teenager to help her through a dark period in her life, a time when she felt invisible to all. Many years later she believed she'd lost her creativity and needed to start at the beginning, she joined a CANWA poetry workshop and now her poems flow again.

We are the past with our ancestors  
We are the present with our people  
We are the future with our children  
We are who we are because of them  
Yesterday, today and tomorrow  
Yes, always was. Always will be  
Here on this our sacred land.  
Ignoring Australia's true history  
Will not change it nor erase it.  
Accepting it, forgiving your kin  
Moving forward together as one  
Celebrating our diversity today  
Celebrating our future equally:  
Then true healing, true living  
Together as a Nation  
Together with one story  
Giving equality, fairly  
To our first nation people  
In work, in play, in this—  
This our land of bounty.

**Balginjirr, 'A Special Place  
on our Home River Country'!**

Anne Poelina

Dr Anne Poelina is a doctoral health science scholar and Adjunct Senior Research Fellow with the Nulungu Research Institute, University of Notre Dame, Broome.

I came home to our river country, our place... our space... today.  
I stood at your gravesite and recall the first night when I came back to my mother's land, and now I ask you... Do you know what is coming our way?

I heard your many lived stories... those who had stood before, through the collective wisdom as elders, now see some of their children's children start to sway.

Is country for sale, is country for keeps, who will work with country to watch over the people who sleep.

Some dream, dreams of money and some talk of gold, lead, mineral sands, intensive agriculture, pastoralism, harvesting water into licences and allocation flows.

The nightmare for people like me, is to be buried alive from the constant demands on a sacred river and kinship system, not found anywhere else on the planet, but to us known, inter-generationally as the River of Life.

Can we learn from the Murray Darling... hey, what about the oldest river in the world... the Finke... let these rivers share with us what the humans have done! We need to know this to let the Mardoowarra, Martuwarra... Fitzroy River run.

Do we cover it with intensive cotton, coal mine, scar up the country... drawing from aquifers, seismic lines... fracking hydro-geology... or do we take a breath and keep the living waters living free?

Can we listen to the ancient songlines, singing the creation stories of geo-heritage, astronomy... astrology and ancient boab trees?