



SHAWN DeSOUZA-COELHO

Department: English

Program: MA

The PoeTree is built upon the principle that community is the answer. It is the first step in a multi-year plan to foster community engagement and to provide financial assistance to those communities.

The installation itself consists of a large plastic/metallic tree possessing one hundred and thirty branches made of steel wire. At the end of each of these branches is an alligator clip, and within the jaws of each clip is a single slip of paper containing a poem. Passers-by are able to take a poem from the tree at any time they wish. Nearby is a sign that says as much. Also nearby is a small stand with pens and blank slips of paper so that passers-by can also leave their own poems for others to take.

Here we have a simple exchange between strangers, anonymous if they wish to be, and above all emotionally charged. This exchange is another way to know and understand one another through the written word.

Interesting fact: *The PoeTree* was first planted in Trinity Bellwoods Park in Toronto, ON on August 27, 2017. *The PoeTree* was at the Schneider Haus National Historic Site on November 4, 2017 for Kitchener's NIGHT\SHIFT Festival.