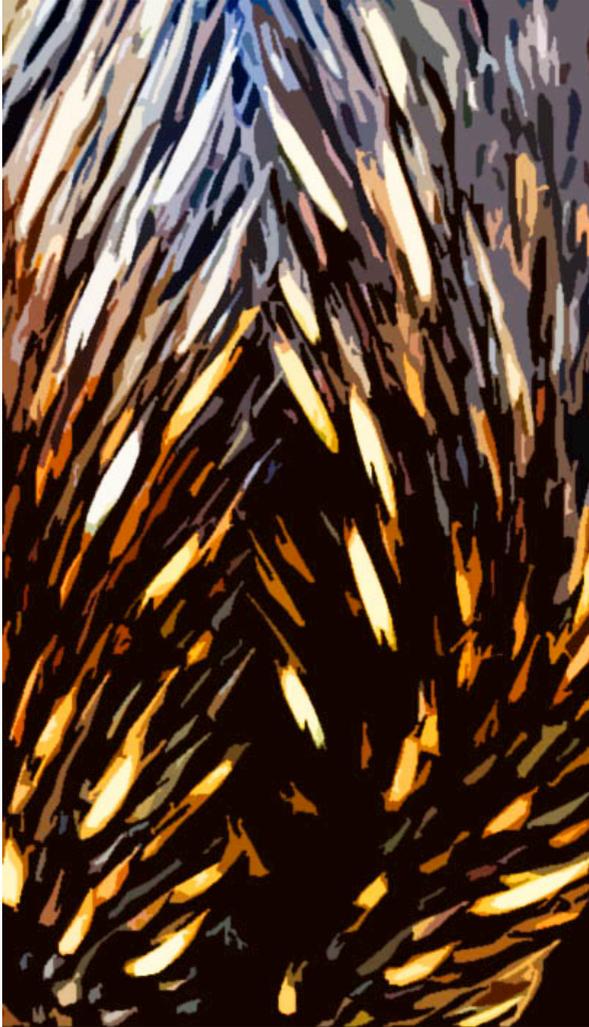


HIDDEN TALENT

contributions of aboriginal musicians of the new england tablelands
to contemporary aboriginal culture and cultural re-vitalisation

the lyric poetry



peter yanada mckenzie

i'll dance with you 'til the morning
my dreams of you are of course
gossamer webs I am spinning
when we dance the armidale waltz
peter mckenzie 2010

the lyric poetry of
peter mckenzie

HIDDEN TALENT

Contributions of Aboriginal musicians
of the New England Tablelands to Contemporary
Aboriginal Culture and Cultural Re-vitalisation

Lyrics / Poetry submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Creative Arts

University of Western Sydney
College of Arts

Sydney, Australia
December 2010

Dedicated to
Mavis Mary Elizabeth McKenzie

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macky

well mavis mary elizabeth can you hear me pray?
when i tell you of your famil-ly and where they are today
your eldest travelled 'round the world found art and image-ry
your youngest davy died too soon mission by the sea

you have a grandson mavis his mother you well know
when she came from the emerald isle so many years ago
your oldest son and this good wife are not together now
tho' time and tide will not harm the friendship that they know

your grandson serves the nation a proud aust-ral-ian
a soldier father has two boys thomas and young ryan
you'd be so proud our mavis to see these two fine lads
a legacy of your sacrifice to good times and the bad

mavis mary elizabeth the three name epitaph
i have often wondered if this will make you laugh
that such a lovely title was never used on one
who for me and davy always knew as mum
who for me and davy always knew as mum

My Mother and my family are important to me and I wrote this as a tribute to Mum whose never-ending struggle to keep me and my brother in food and clothing was amazing, this project could never have been attempted but for her heroic efforts...I miss her everyday of my life

the armidale waltz

i feel a dream softly, weaving
as we dance with heavenly wings
there's thousands of reasons to love you
they drift like silk on the wind

i'll dance with you 'til the morning
my dreams of you are of course
gossamer webs I am spinning
when we dance the armidale waltz

you're here in my heart
al-ways on my mind
when i see you the sun starts to shine
i've known you forever
i will for all time 'til poets forget how to rhyme

i'll dance with you 'til the morning
my dreams of you are of course
gossamer webs I am spinning
when we dance the armidale waltz

i'd dance with you 'til the morning
my dreams of you, are of course
gossamer webs i am spinning...
when we dance the armidale waltz

My mother loved to dance and my wife loves to dance, I can't dance. I wrote this waltz in armidale during the project but its really about me wanting to dance to it with my wife one day, I missed her so much

charles, koiki, oodgeroo and albert

has anybody here seen my old friend charlie
can you tell me where he's gone?
he freed a lot of people when he taught them freedoms cause
i just looked around and he was gone

has anybody here seen my old friend koiki
can you tell me where he's gone?
he freed a lot of people, when he-stood-firm for his land

i just looked around and he was gone

has anybody here seen my old friend oodgeroo
can you tell me where she's gone?
she freed a lot of people, with her writing and her love
i just looked around and she was gone

don't you love the things they stood for?
didn't they try to find some good for you and me?
and we'll be free some day soon
and it's a-gonna be one day

has anybody here seen my old friend albert
can you tell me where he's gone
i thought i saw him painting just over yonder hill
painting koiki, charles an' oodgeroo

Ode to Albert Namatjira, Eddie Mabo, Oodgeroo Noonuckle and Charles Perkins
(in homage to d.dimucci's classic song, mathew, martin and john)

bayside mission dreaming

bayside mission dreamin' tin shacks by the sea
i still taste blue nipper crab in my mem – o - ry
still there for me in ol' coral tree

i knew it when i lived there in my youth i swore
that in my life i'll never go back to bein' poor
no more back doors no more back doors

i have travelled all over the world
tasted the wealth and lived with some girls
but sometimes i'm wishin' i was still fishin'
for bluenippers down in the bay
in bot'ny bay down in the bay

our lives were not easy 200 years of pain
lived in shacks not free blacks
but better than the mission in pain
always in pain always in pain

but i believe in children our futures in their hands
the elders reach so they can teach
respect and care for the land take it in hand
and care for the land

bayside mission dreaming all in my mem – o - ry
as a child when we ran wild thought you'd never be free
just like me never be free just like me never be free..
la per mission dreaming

tin mansion

on a lonely hill new england graveyard woolbrook
james mckenzie lies with family there
alan jimmy and clivey sleep beside him
rita and tooney came to lie elsewhere

son of a tribal man from southern queensland
granny mariah married the man she knew
he came to buy the land he knew that they had stolen
built a new tin mansion mongst the very few

he was a man who was a man in the new England
a gentle man i loved beyond his years
and i'm proud to be the son of a son mckenzie
i know my son and his sons will carry on the years

i'm told our legacy no longer stands there
tin mansion on the hill no longer home
but memory will always be a constant
mother earth has called his old tin mansion home



the killin' has began

christians and tucker

sunday mornin' Christians watch koori fisher man
he gittin' bully mullet black tea billy can
eatin bread and drippin' the killin' has began

bad tucker

sometime muttonfish babe johnny cake in fryin' pan
flour tea and sugar well the killin' has began
bad bad tucker blues hated mission days

mission dogs

he can't feed his mirry - garngs can't feed 'em any day,
his temper his shit man they love him anyway
good dog bad food hated mission days

grog

moodgie asked you got 'im brother? said moodge i'd get 'im
if i can
sherry mus-cat hard goom that'll kill the pain
but no matter what they call 'im the killin' has began

civilisation & coppers

the killin', has began man the killin' has began
they call it civil - i - zay - shan but the killin' has began
if the copper never catch you then the bad bad tucker can

the killin' has began man
the killin' has began man

the killin' has began
the killin' has began

A Blues which I wrote after hearing about bad times on the mission at Armidale, an ironic comment because Armidale never had a mission, but I came from one, so I thought about my life on a mission and came to the conclusion that a major factor in the killing of Aboriginal people was through the food chain, it has been more effective than bullets and is insidious as its main killer, Diabetes. I am a diabetic as is most of my family and a major disproportionate number of Aboriginal friends and relatives.

The killin' had ALREADY began when I wrote this song and it continues...

brown bag blues

he chill you out ma baby he chill ya all nite long
he chill you out ma baby 'n' he thrill ya all nite long
but when you get up in the mornin' hone you done drank 'im home

lissen to me mama lissen while i sing this song mmm mmm
lissen to me mama i'll sing you this brown bag song mmm mmm
treat me right ma baby won't need your sugar for long

i got the brown bag blues and lord! it gonna suck me dry
i got the brown bag blues 'n' all i wanna do is fly
he gonna kill me soon ain't got the strength to try

they put me in the mansion honey did you ever know oh no
no
they put me in the mansion 'n' left my little brown bag home
they wouldn't let me have 'im oh baby i sure miss 'im so

lissen to me mama lissen while i sing this song mmm mmm
lissen to me mama i'll sing you this brown bag song mmm mmm
treat me right ma baby won't need your sugar for long

i got the brown bag blues and lord! it gonna suck me dry
i got the brown bag blues 'n' all i wanna do is fly
he gonna kill me soon ain't got the strength to try

“Grog”, “Piss”, “Him” (you got 'im brother?) all names for alcohol, blackfullas (and Gub-bahs) drinking out of little brown paper bags, the realisation that it will eventually kill him, “its gonna kill me soon but I ain't got the strength to try” A sad realisation that some Aboriginal friends at Armidale, although superb

musicians are going to end up playing for drinks never to realise their potential in local or regional music. I wrote this in a blues format because it is a blues and sad indictment of the lack of opportunity for some Aboriginal musicians to progress out of mediocrity. I use this song / poem as a homage to the blues genre.

coorinna, coorinna forever

ride a wild bass strait swell
which is deeper than hell
to the island of apples and legends
the story we're told of the thylacine bold
finished in sadness and sorrow

the rugged northeast valleys and dales
was the home that coorinna did roam in
but mankind and greed
made thylacine bleed
and its fate was sealed in the gloamin'

oh where oh where is coorinna today?
is it gone forever dreamin'?
will we find it again and lose it when
we kill it with kindness and feelin'

in the rugged north east
they tormented the beast
its fate was sealed by the hunter
a price on its pelt and the gun in his belt
was the hunter's promise of doom
was the hunter's promise of doom

now science I'm told is opening a bold
new doorway to life ever after
coorinna just might be able to bite
again the hand of the murderers
thylacines clone just might have reason to live
for coorinna lives on forever

coorinna lives on forever
coorinna lives on forever

the thylacine, a sad symbol of the precarious nature of any species. i wrote this song whilst watching a documentary about the cloning of the thylacine to possibly revive the species, it made me think of genocide and other atrocities enacted in australia. it also reminded me that the white tasmanians attempted genocide on that state's indigenous inhabitants and unlike their death blow to the poor thylacine, they didn't succeed with the indigenous people. coorinna is one of many tasmanian aborigine's names for the thylacine.

cotton chippin' song

cotton chippin' cotton chippin'
cotton chippin' cotton chippin'
cotton chippin' cotton chippin'
cotton chippin' cotton chippin'
hear my song
all a-day long
all i'm worth
hate black dirt

tired back, tired back
tired back, tired back
tired back, tired back
tired back, tired back
hear my song
done no wrong
oh so sore
want no more

achin' bones, achin' bones
achin' bones, achin' bones
achin' bones, achin' bones
achin' bones, achin' bones
got the shakes
feared of snakes
hear my plea
hate bin - dee

tired back, tired back
tired back, tired back
tired back, tired back
done no wrong
oh so sore
want no more

hate the job, hate the job
hate the job, hate the job
hate the job, hate the job
chippin' cotton blues
wanna go home
here too long
weeds and heat
are a-killin' meeeee

several of my research subjects have worked in the cotton fields in western nsw, after talking with them about their experiences and especially the methodologies of cotton chipping, i decided to write this song in homage to that large and still active aboriginal workforce. the constants of the work appear to be tired backs, aching bones, snakes and bindiis.

i wanted this work to have a rhythm or a certain cadence to emulate or pay homage to a certain field song rhythm of the constant movement of cotton chippers as they work the paddocks, in short it has a rhythmic driving along cadence, i am trying for real economy of words in the “responses” parts of the verses and chorus. (thanks to charlie trindall for information)

this song is respectfully dedicated to the aboriginal cotton chippers, individuals and teams of western nsw, they hold a valuable but largely unnoticed place in our nsw rural labour history.

davy was a thinker

a cold breeze crept around the ankles of davy mac as he stood
in silent thought throughout the funeral ceremony why do we
have to be here why did that young fulla neck himself?

botany cemetery is a lonely place at the best of times but mid
winter gloom added to the sorrow hope those old women don't
start wailing it starts everyone else off but then it's the only
part that seems to be left for blackfulla
how come this christian bloke is burying our mob what happened
to our ceremony and old customs davy asked these questions of
himself but he knew the answer and anger welled up in his soul his
brother pete had said words like cultural imposition and appropriation
big words but it didn't mean a thing to him at the time going down
the club and having a charge with his mates seemed more important

pete was over in america doing art stuff a grant or something
and he wondered what he would say about how things are changing
here at home davy became aware that the people had started to
sing and the familiar strains of the 'old rugged cross' drifted out
across the bay maybe the wind was carrying it over to where
lieutenant cook and governor phillip had landed so many years ago.

yeah what would pete think about new breeds of born agains
the sly erosion by government and our own people of our few rights
not to mention the cultural suicide our own mob are engaging in
fuck we've even got black philosophy farms whatever that is
every bloody religion in the country is still trying to claim us for
salvation.

davy was getting angry, thinking about this stuff was something he couldn't seem to talk about with his mates the tab and drinking was their outlet for cultural frustrations that seemed to be lost to them how will old ways survive in a modern city unless we adapt them who seems to care anymore especially we poor bastards who are blackfullas wrapped up in white skin we know who we are and don't need to be always dressed in the colours to prove anything

the crowd started to wander off the burial was over davy talked briefly with the kid's family and started the long walk back to the mission with a couple of mates funny he reflected our mob have walked to the cemetery for generations wonder if this old habit will die as well we only seem to meet old mates and relations at this sad time because people come from all over to say goodbye wonder if that'll survive too

most people on the mission thought davy mac was a grumpy sort of bloke after all dialysis and blood pressure was enough for anyone wasn't it?

my brother davy was proud of his kooriness and had a real concern for his own mob's cultural survival he too, now sleeps at botany

where heaven has gone

i never please you tho lord knows i've tried
or be what you want me to be
its breaking my heart to hear you complain

lord i don't know what heaven is like

i'm praisin' your friends and i leave you all alone
but thats all in your own distant mind
so i'm leaving today with my heart far away

to find out where heaven has gone

look into your heart and you will see me
reach out i will be there
i want you to see if you still love me
reach out and i will be there.

so i'm leaving today with my heart far away
to find out where heaven has gone
yes i'm leavin' today with my heart far away

i'll find out where heaven has gone

a personal journey about living alone and losing hope and faith in new england,
which is too hard to explain...

hey! come on...

hey come on all you born agains tell us 'bout your choice
you never wore a black man's skin 'til mammon raised its voice
why don't you go back to your holes you are not welcome here
black australia's struggle is for those who really care
you born again bastards steal our souls

hey come on all you new breed elders where did you come from
you never ever gave a rats when chips were really down
you sidled up for handouts invented traditional past
now there's many elders groups all fighting to the last
you new breed bastards shame our real elders

hey come on all you so called artists did the gub-bahs say to you
why brother you got a suntan so i guess it must be true
you a blackman artist mate! paint those little dots don't worry
you'll make us rich don't need no skills we'll make real artists sorry
you so called artist bastards kill our heritage

hey come on all you family mob vile nepotism rules
'cause anyone with skills or a brain will make you look like fools
so you keep it in the family yes black parasites are real
the gubbahs love you like their own and your cards are what
they deal
you nepotistic bastards will pay for your betrayal

born agains family mobs new breed elders too
so called artists and their gammon mates steal from me and you
we never had these parasites when mammon didn't rule
its like we live in purgatory where being real is cruel

born agains steal the culture and the jobs by cunning and false plight and sometimes false aboriginal credentials
new breed elders expect respect but get only get gammon attention by the gub-bahs who want use them up and no respect from their own community
so called artists paint those little dots as they sit there day and night they think that's all there is to art while the gub-bah dealers bleed the real money
family mob nepotism is a disease practised openly by parasites in the aboriginal community they obstruct our progress our health issues and our reality our future
this song was inspired by my hero kev carmody, his use of an un-common word (mammon) which rhymes with a common word used by black australians (gammon) set me thinking and i ended up with these lyrics. this song also explains itself and to a certain extent it explains me...i have reached an age where i don't care if my comments are not agreeable to certain people or bloodywell not!, i can no longer condone the abuse and bastardisation of some aspects of contemporary aboriginal culture so i can't help opening my big flap. i hope some people will read the words of this song and think about them as well, however, some people may never speak to me again..... i really don't care

koori gals and captains

captains are a funny lot they cruise the pubs to see
charting unknown waters in a sea of cold VB

brown skinned local mermaids are singing captains home
bulging wallets, shouting all they sail to the great unknown

four sheets to the wind and ebbing tides cloud the captains view
pretty soon he's sailing on to the rocks of you know who

so heres to all the captains who never sailed the sea
raise a glass and feel the arse of the closest one to thee

ah its quite a happy cruise and captains never think
when they wake up in the morning that they're still deep in the drink

seems our koori gals are fighting freedoms war in other ways
putting bodies on the line revenge for old time days

so! heres to all those koori gals who crew them to be free
they sail on dangerous waters to show that they are free

My introduction to pubs was at the Woolloomooloo bay hotel where the koori gals from la perouse and inner city Sydney used to go find the captains who supplied them with liquor and alcohol never realising that the trap was laid before they even came to the hotel

lament for eora 1

oo oo oo ooooo

eeeeeee_____orr_____ah!

kurra-jong boo-roobonga-gal ca-at-tai cari-gal
mul-goah! gomm-eri-gal too-ga-gal bidgi-gal
can-ai-gal terra-merra-gal kay-im-gal canne-me-gal
cammerai-gal

eeeeeee_____orr_____ah!

boro-gee-gal garu-al-gai birra-bira-gal bool-bain-ora
wallu-matta-gai cadi-gal bed-ia-gal kamey-gal
cab-ro-gal mur-rooroo-dial norong-gerra-gal
gwai-ee-gal muri-gong tag-ary

eeeeeee_____orr_____ah!

whilst living in armidale in the land of my fathers people, the anaiwan of the new england tablelands i sorely missed my mother's people in my saltwater community of la perouse, the cadigal band of the eora, however it has always been sad to realise that within the first two years of occupation by the british, some 65% of eora people were lost to smallpox, an epidemic which has been questioned as a deliberate "germ warfare" strategy by the invaders who had a similar track record elsewhere in their global colonies. my thoughts about the situation suggested that a "lament" style of song was appropriate and so, for me, 'speaking the names' of the sydney tribal bands brings them back to life in my mind...

mckenzie lament

oh where do you go
oh where do you stay
when you travel in your lonely mind

is it the place in your dreams
where the sad-ness always means
that the morning will bring you back home

i will dream you home
from wherever you roam
i will love you
no matter where you are

from the place in your dreams,
where the sad-ness always means
that the morning will bring you back home

i had a dream of a time
when you said you were mine
we'd never be parted again

in the place of your dreams
where the sadness always means
that the morning will bring you back home

i will dream you home
from wherever you roam
i will love you
no matter where you are

from the place in your dreams,
where the sad-ness always means
that the morning will bring you back home
the morning will bring you back home to me

narragundah dreaming

three happy years i spent in narragundah
picking beans and peas living in your love
time was nothin' but a passing fancy
and lord i know you watched me from above

the little hut we lived in on the river
then the message that you left me on the wall
told me that you had found a new love
on murphy's farm i'll never hear you call

when you called me up for teatime in the evening
with the dingoes howling in the afterglow
i never knew how much i would regret dear
that we'd parted coz i always loved you so

i heard about the storm that hit moruya
how you were caught upon the raging sea
the dreaded waves that took your life so easy
haunt me now because they keep me comp-anee

now i'm on the coast and fishin' for a livin'
i dream of happy days at narra long ago
murphy's paddocks broke our backs then it broke our hearts
the years go slow lord i miss you

north countree

man

oh the winter chill can't match your heart
i've got to get away to mend my broken heart
oh armidale you're not the gal for me

you know i'm running away from years of bad times
and the mem – o - rees are not too kind
oh armidale you're not the gal for me
if i go back to sydney
and your sor-row melts my heart
i will travel to north count-tree
to give our love another start

woman

when you were gone, the winter was cruel
and i was thinkin' was i a fool
to keep your love when my heart was breakin'

well the autumn leaves fall in central park
and the promises you made to my sad heart
are warmer as you step out on the station
you have come back home from sydney
and the sorrow has left my heart
we will we travel in north countree
to give our love another start

for me there's always been a certain loneliness about armidale, and expressing it was hard, i always wanted to try write verse which was man/woman oriented, so the topic lent itself to that end, but as i was ever-hopeful, i gave it a nice ending, boy got the girl etc.

shine on jesus

oh the whole worlds a-sleep and its in the need of love
we need to all unite while there is hope in-sight

he is the only light we need

in this tunnel of doubt through a mountain of trouble
in the dark when he holds our hand we see clear to the other end

he is the only light we nee-eed

shine on jesus shine on me
shine on jesus you're the only light we need

when we're sailing alone through dark and un-charted waters
we won't fear runnin' aground coz we have a light house now

he is the only light we need

shine on jesus shine on me
shine on jesus you're the only light we need

a little known aspect of aboriginal celebration of country music and it near neighbours, religious songs, is that in mourning or (sorry time as it is known as in semi-traditional communities) certain songs are performed at funery ceremonies whether it has religious overtones or not, certain country songs by popular artists are continually requested by the deceased's families. this song is my homage to that genre and the people who have asked me at armidale during my research period to perform such an important gig.

homage to gove scrivener

silent tears

in a little country town, thinking bout my home.
have i wasted several years,
came to live here with high hopes found it was a dream
can't change the past nor cry the silent tears

the silent tears the silent tears
can't change the past can't cry the silent tears

country livin' is okay if you are content
to being locked up in a distant dream
cannot wish away my life damage is all done
can't change the past nor cry the silent tears

the silent tears the silent tears
can't change the past can't cry the silent tears

they tell that its different to city life up here,
i told them that it's all a sad charade.
simple people caught up in their tiny little worlds.
still marching in the same old tired parade.

heading back to city life feeling some relief
life is complete have no hidden fears.
cannot wish away my life damage is all done
can't change the past nor cry the silent tears

can't change the past nor cry the silent tears
the silent tears the silent tears
can't change the past can't cry the silent tears

sometimes loneliness consumed me living in armidale, and the city v. country attitudes that abound were unbearable, i refer to small minded-ness, marching in the same old tired parade etc. realisations that i had wasted years of my life in the country and that it possibly destroyed my marriage almost made me physically ill, i would sometimes get out of bed in the mornings, stand t here and scream at the top of my voice what the fuck am i doing here? i was fearful that i was having a nervous breakdown but common sense told me "bullshit! you just hate the fuckin' place" believe me, i don't really ever want to go that mental state again...

tell me robert gregory,

tell me robert Gregory, talk our culture home,
with our brothers and our sisters, we are not alone,
the world calls out for culture, our people call out shame!
tell me robert gregory, that we are not to blame.

our mob saw lieu - tenant cook, land across the bay,
guns and soldiers bled us dry, they didn't go away,
200 years we've held our ground, could be a thousand more,
tell us robert gregory, can we suffer any more

help us robert gregory, when you talk our culture home,
help us see the light shine on where we have to roam
the world will hear our story robert gregory when we find
that justice in a crazy world, is always on our mind.

tell me robert gregory, are you ever tired
trying to tell our story, to those who've never cried
tell em the truth my cousin, that we are not to blame
we don't have to hang our heads ever to feel shame

you're a bridge now robert gregory for our cultures hopes
don't ever let em tear you down, they're only mis-an-thropes

my cousin robert gregory simms (well known as uncle greg in western sydney) is
a passionate man when it comes to contemporary aboriginal culture,

he is a rare person in the sydney aboriginal community in that he has cultural knowledge which he freely passes on to schools, festivals, etc. however he gets quite angry when 'born again blacks' and similar false gods and drop-kicks show up and start passing on questionable cultural advice to the general public. within the aboriginal community the 'tall poppy' syndrome is rife and people like greg have to contend with uninformed and jealous people as well! a couple of years ago, greg came to armidale and gave the local community a cultural 'lift' which was appreciated by the community who like many other communities have lost touch with their heritage. this song supports and encourages my dear cousin's endeavours

browlee moon

koori angel

browlee moon drifting cross the ocean
browlee moon bring her home to me,
my sweet and gentle koori maiden,
brought a reason for living back to me...

in the morning of my life i ran with dingoes
the patterns of my life were drawn for me
but this koori girl from dear old browlee
put a balance in my life and sanit-ee

seems that someone from above sent her to find me
for her new path seemed to be so very clear
the time i know was right for her to be there
for my fading tracks of life were so unclear

though my heart was calmer with this new love
and life's balance was to-me quite content
my browlee maiden left me like a soft breeze
then i knew from great baime she was sent...

One day my cousin Julie said to me “we’re only a *mingy little mob of a family eh pete?”

our *mingy little mob

ya know ’s true cuz we’re a mingy little mob a little fam-ilee
we live on distant tablelands or paradise by the sea

some of us can see the light responding to our touch
i could never lose my love for you I love you all so much

fam-ilee o fam-ilee we move on fam-ilee
but i could never lose my love for you even if i tried

mingy little famliy we are for all time
we carry our ancestral ties wherever we may lie

i could never lose my love for you even if i tried
i could never lose my love for you even if I tried

**min-jee - small, insignificant.*

ballad of a hero

he came to the city lookin' for answers
to change a life so enclosed
he was a thinker son of a proud race
he'd change the system alone

from the warm country breezes to a city which freezes
forgets you inside of a day
before he could settle and find some answers
a new year soon slipped away

he came to the city played some good football
and married a sweet brown skinned girl
they had a good life she was a good wife
and soon the family was three

and all of the answers that he had been chasing
he thought they had all come his way
his life was complete he had no questions
and fifteen good years slipped away

well drugs took his baby pneumonia his lady
and oppression was starting to fall
it was in '67 our people were marching
again he answered the call

and while his tears were falling he was now calling
for answers that he hadn't found
he turned to the struggle and they found a fighter
they never knew had been around

now he lives where he's needed through-out the country
and his whole life lives out of a case
talking and writing - helping his brothers
and showing he cares for his race

its been thirty years of constant devotion
and a grey beard now covers his face
he says a lot of it was tragic some of it magic
and we've still got a long way to go

he wanted to wade in with fist waving action
as if he was still in his prime
but autumn has winter to follow and hinder
and soon he slipped from the line

we lost a great leader he gave us some answers
and gave us the strength to seek more
he came to the city looking for answers
and found them in so many ways

and found them in so many ways

this story could be about a lot of aboriginal people i have met in my life, people who come to the city from rural areas hoping to find a better life or just to find themselves. max silver, charles perkins, my father george mckenzie who came from woolbrook in the new england and charlie trindall were all people who inspired this work, its not about any of them but it's a similar tale.

nothing man

i don't wanna be a nothing man
some poor bastard who's got no plan
i can't bear this marking time
or sounding like i want to whine

am i just forgotten or not there
worked all my life really cared
i'm readin' want ads silent screams
i'm fading into endless dreams

new age mornin, killin' my prime
new age evenin', i dream one more time
you know, sometimes, i just wanna just stop tryin
pack my bags go real soon watch the sunsets fade in broome

*i've always loved you so how can i?
see you work so hard look you in the eye
i couldn't hold my head up nor could you see it*

how could you think i didn't love you?

new age mornin', killin' my prime
new age evenin', i dream one more time
you know, sometimes, i just wanna just stop tryin
pack my bags go real soon watch the sunsets fade in broome

new age mornin, killin' my prime
new age evenin', i'll dream, just one more time

These works are from my creative soul, the creativity that saved me from being destroyed emotionally and physically by being in armidale. separated from my wife and family friends because no one wanted to employ me in my hometown, too much of a smartarse or too smart or a threat to the born again parasites of the “Aboriginal industry”, my loneliness and guilt of separation could only be tempered by the loyalty and friendship of new found friends in armidale and the very few who cared at home. I am saddened by personal events but maybe it’s a lesson about who you think cares about you and how you never really knew them, how greed can change people. do people ever know you? Do you ever know them? Its when your emotional self loses control and surrenders itself to sometimes unfortunate sensations of love and devotion that’s the killer. I’m so tired of wanting to be forgiven for something that was not my fault, something I had no control over, something I’m paying in blood for, I’m so tired of apologising for my human frailties to cretins who never knew and will never know me,

I *know* I’m worth knowing, but I’m just so tired...

Peter Yanada McKenzie

the lyric poetry of



peter yanada mckenzie

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