

KEVIN MOORE

AMAZE

CAROUSEL MUSIC RIDES on the soft spring breeze. He stands just off the path in dew-covered grass that the sun hasn't got around to warming up yet. Perfect balls of water roll off the impenetrable black polish protecting the leather shoes, his grey suit trousers, ankles wet from behind. Still the crease is visible all the way up hitting a black leather belt holding a Charles Atlas torso. He looks up and runs his long fingers straight down his unexciting grey tie; like gardening spades. Pressing hard against the rippling muscles of his chest, the fairy floss pink, long sleeve shirt, stays smooth like the silk it's made of.

*'THE WORLD is charged with the Grandeur of God/
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil/
It gathers to a greatness,'*

A blurred wave sways between Albert and the tree, a sound like a horse shattering on bitumen interrupts the intricate thoughts. As it passes he breaks from the trance and turns his attention to what has invaded the ceremony. Albert's eyes dart straight to the source of the noise; long black boots with icepicks for heels leave a trail from where she had come. Her hips transfer the Amazonian legs from side to side, one foot in front of the other; the straight design of imprints on the cement is like a calling card to Albert. Her dress effortlessly moves with her body, dancing with the full shapely hips and holding in more than comfortably rounded breasts.

She turns, pivoting on one heel, drilling half an inch into the concrete. Albert looks at her oval shaped face and is drawn in by the pouting lips; she was the female equivalent of Mick Jagger. Her black ringlet hair falls away revealing brown, shallow set eyes, mischievously sultry in shape. A brown sugar coating from head to toe, restrained firm masses of muscles in her arms and legs. She

looks into him, smiling, turning her eyes down to his extended chest.

‘Hey, what mob you from? I’m Harriet.’

Albert motions his lips toward the tree, ‘This is where I’m from.’

Her short burst of laughter makes Albert feel uncomfortable, he slouches to the left looking away for only seconds, then straightening his broad powerful shoulders, pushing a ‘fuck you’ look back at her, but she’s not there. Albert feels a moment of bewilderment, his mind rushing, thinking, no fucking way she could have moved that quick. He moves closer to the tree, almost tripping over the exposed knotted roots, webbing in and out of the ground. The volume of carousel music comes through in waves louder with each set. Now crouching with sprawled out arms and bent legs like a lizard in the sun, Albert keeps low, looking around the tree as if it had corners. Nothing!

‘ . . . like the ooze of oil/

Crushed. Why do men then now reck his rod?/

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;’

The sun is higher now, broken light peaks through the eucalyptus-scented leaves; branches stretch dominantly out, owning the land and fenced park since Dreamtime. The trees vent a sweet damp fragrant mixture of bark; leaking sap from encased smooth grey and cream skin, entrenched in an oval shaped scar that time had healed, but would never cover. Albert’s concentration returns to the tree, he clears his mind from a world around him, but the amazing odour still lingered from her—Harriet. He has now discarded the shiny black shoes and dark blues socks, feeling mother earth under his soft, size thirteen feet. A connection with his country transports a spiritual consciousness one he had never known or felt, satisfying a need he had been looking for and until now could never put his finger on. Why?

‘ . . . And all is smeared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;/

And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil/

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.’

Albert’s face is shadowed for only a second, by a bird circling the giant tree. He looks up and the sting of the sun’s sharpness makes him turn away. Regaining his blurry vision, Albert spots an eagle gracefully tilting its soft dark brown feathers toward the tree, gliding without breaking wingspan to regenerate elevation. His observation of Albert stays vigilant while effortlessly

coursing the perimeter, his head tucked under one wing the eagle's wise black eyes peruse a landing place. Pushing air with frenzied wings and slanting his body back, the eagle expands his claws out, dwarfing a branch that the tree has nurtured for thousands of years. He imbeds the massive claws, like a vice, his balance is perfect, not flinching as he lands. The eagle overlooks the park, his astute persona tells Albert this is his hunting area and he's the conception of generations of eagles that had hunted there.

*'... And for all this, nature is never spent;/
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;/
And though the last nights off the black west went.'*

'That's Bunjil!

Albert whips violently around, as the carousel music is doused out by clap sticks and singing. A man sitting under the tree where it had been scarred, acknowledges Albert with a nod. His long, wiry, salt and pepper hair, extends down to his sideburns that form a beard protruding past his navel. At first Albert can't make out his face as it blends into the shadows the tree comforts him in. Albert shuffles closer, his eyes adjust and the Elder crosses his legs. His long slender powerful arms rest on his knees where his wrists and relaxed hands hang down. His skin is black like coal, wearing only a lap-lap he points at the eagle.

'Creator.'

*'... Oh morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—/
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent /
World broods with warm breast and with ah! Bright wings.'*

Albert turns back to Bunjil, the branches of the tree are no longer covered with leaves, in its place a transformation of grey and pink movement. The sun's rays try to penetrate through the shielded thick mass of galahs, but the darkness that now sits over Albert makes him shiver. With no sun to warm him, Albert feels the eclipse embracing his already rigid body, a threatening cold chill of caution cascades within his veins, heightening senses for reaction.

A familiar woman's voice chanting lingers to Albert, her words are not clear, they seem jumbled and incoherent; he had heard the lingo before when nursed as a boy. Suppressed and locked within, he knew the language spilling from Harriet's lips, like a river of faith sweet to Albert's ears, luring his mind back to where the Elder sits. Harriet's hypnotic singing in rhythm with the clap sticks silences the

screeching and chattering from the communal mass of galahs. The Elder joins in the singing, completing the strange harmony. Harriet's arms are above her . . .

[clock radio]

*'This land is mine, this land is me, rock, animal, water, tree,
They are my song My being's here where I belong'*

. . . head circling the fire, traditional and modern dancing conducts like electricity through her limbs. Graceful long sweeping arm movements, leaping high and floating, she never lands. Swooping inches from the ground, her transformation in to an eagle leaves Albert amazed.

*'This land owns me, from generations past to infinity /
We're all but women and man /
you only fear what you don't understand.'*

The warm breeze washes over Albert's face, he rolls over facing the open window, where a smell of eucalyptus emanates from the tree across the road.

*'They won't take it away /
They won't take it away from me'*

Albert forces his hand from under the sheet that's twisted like a vine around his taut stomach. Pressing the snooze button, he lays motionless thinking of the surreal dream. His childhood memories engulf and panic him—a woman telling stories of Dreamtime and the songs that accompanied them.

Throwing his legs around and sitting up stiff like a mannequin, Albert stares at his hands covered in earth, he flips them over, his fingernails are caked with dirt, and seeing past his fingers, feet with soot mud.

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This Land is Mine

lyrics Kev Carmody and Paul Kelly (Publishing Administered by Mushroom Music); music Kev Carmody and Paul Kelly.