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A stylized illustration in orange and black. The top features a large, intricate geometric pattern of interconnected circles and lines. Below this, several domed buildings with arched windows and doorways are depicted. A rainbow arches over one of the buildings. The foreground is filled with dense, textured patterns of vertical and diagonal lines, interspersed with circular motifs containing dots. At the bottom, there are wavy, horizontal lines representing water or a path.

**FALSE  
CLAIMS OF  
COLONIAL  
THIEVES**


**CHARMAINE  
PAPERTALK GREEN  
& JOHN KINSELLA**

# False Claims of Colonial Thieves

*Charmaine Papertalk Green*

and

*John Kinsella*

Magabala  
Books 

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Cover Image: *We Remember – Our Barna!* By Charmaine Papertalk Green and Mark Smith. This print tells the story of Geraldton's foundation around colonialism and its impact on the First Peoples – the Wilunyu of the Yamaji Nation. Colonial structures built on traditional campsites, forced the traditional occupiers out of their long held space to become onlookers of where they once lived – sang, slept, ate, danced and yarned. Colonial and contemporary structures only hide the surface but not the memory or connection of Yamaji to their land, 2016.

*Dedicated to my brothers, Charles E Harvey (dec),  
Alex Green, twins – Peter and John Green (dec),  
Carl Green and Junior Green*  
CPG

*Dedicated to Kim Scott*  
JK



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## Prologue

The stakeholders want their environmental scientists to deliver  
flora and fauna on a platter, and they will do so for a price.  
Stygofauna speak up through the land; some listen, more don't.

And so the mining companies reach into our schools,  
funding programs that make students in their own image,  
filling the holes they make in country with propaganda  
sold as learning, gatekeeping into the church of university.

JK

\*

## Prologue Response

Privilege blindness  
if environmental scientists say so  
water comes from a plastic bottle  
what lies on or within country  
cannot be seen for the  
privileged are privilege blind

CPG



# Undermining

I

The king brown does not die from its own poison – within its body, inert.

Uranium within the hold of old ground around Wiluna is more than history. Leave it there. Intact.

The roo-tails sign the ground with making, and then they move on and back until stopped in their tracks.

We try to find our way through the world avoiding reactors. Terms of trade are weapons-grade.

Or see the range folding inwards, burst back out. Scrub, forests, their contents. All gone. Hole.

Lure of the material – to conjure empathy out of furnaces. Giving rise to religions honed as bayonets.

Quarry expanding to echo round owl rock its footing shaky and mice sharp as shrapnel.

JK

\*

2.

Balu winja barna real winja  
Real old ones them ones  
Old ground our country  
With ancient ones deep within  
Wrapped tightly away  
For the earth protecting  
Itself from itself knowing  
It can die from its own poison  
Earth's silver grey hair  
Elder belonging to a time  
When the earth was soft  
The little boy went to sleep  
Balu winja barna real winja  
Real old ones them ones  
Man is a greedy monster  
Interfering to satisfy self  
Pulling old ones to surface  
Birthing a dangerous little boy  
Naming after a god and  
Worshipping like a god  
For the warfare toys of  
Other little boys worldwide  
Energy, power, death, destruction and money  
Uranium is safe in the earth  
Like a sleeping Elder  
Balu winja barna real winja  
Real old ones them ones

CPG

## Grandmothers

My grandmother was a mining town child –  
Kookynie where her father was foreman  
of the South Champion Mine. My father  
worked for decades in Karratha and Kal –  
so it's not as if I come to the mines  
without foreknowledge. But I can only  
see them as the harrowing of Hell,  
the opening of the land to release  
what shouldn't be released,  
a desecration of spirit and place.  
This is no small-scale intrusion  
for the sake of community,  
but open slather, a ripping out,  
an extraction to fuel the world's end.

JK

\*

My grandmother washed  
White town fella's clothes  
To feed her kids and survive  
I don't think mining would have  
Meant much to her when  
Trying to survive on the fringes  
Of the Mullewa township  
She had passed on by  
The time Western Mining  
Started destroying country

Out pass Morawa way  
I saw the rail wagons as a kid  
Rolling on by Maley Street  
Carrying Koolanooka iron ore  
Not understanding what this meant  
Or where this country was going  
Or why they wanted this country  
I was just a kid watching trains

CPG

\*

My grandmother's home is gone now  
though plaques with her words,  
her memories, stand among the tailings.  
She would tell me the story of her  
father lost in the desert being saved  
by an Elder and Afghan cameleer.

As a child, I was obsessed with this  
story and it made the dry spaces  
lush and hopeful. In my great-  
grandfather's delirium, he heard  
the many voices of the desert,  
knew the dry surface was only  
one truth, that deep below  
when they dug, the waters  
of the desert flooded the shafts.

Nothing was as it seemed to him,  
his workers. He knew the language

he couldn't understand was so complex  
it was drawn out of the rock, the plants,  
the very essence of the ground he was  
robbing. And then the miner's disease  
got his lungs, and he died in the hills  
outside Perth, a long way from his  
understanding, a long way from where  
I think he started to know.

Those of us with colonisers  
as ancestors look for ways to retell  
their stories, to build hope. But the fact  
is in the railway, the ore crushers,  
the shafts sunk into country.

My grandmother told me many stories  
of the desert. Of flowers and birds  
on the edges. I am free to retell her stories.  
She made no claim: she let them grow.

I own none of them.

She told me she 'watched the blackfellas'  
through the hessian curtains, watched  
them go out past the town limits,  
out past the claims, out beyond  
the furthest wanderings of the prospectors,  
out where there was a truth she knew  
was so close to home, if only  
she understood how to see.

JK

\*



There were no nanna Alice stories  
Mum didn't talk lots about nanna  
I think it hurt too much for my mum  
To even utter her mother's name  
It was not allowed in those days  
When someone died their name died  
At least the Native Welfare files  
Kind of brought nanna Alice to life  
Nanna was 42 when she died  
I sit at her grave in Geraldton  
Whispering secrets to a nanna  
Telling her stories of country  
Her descendants and their lives  
I am glad the only mining  
She would have known was  
From the rich ochre on her  
Body and in her hair during  
Ceremony time out on country

CPG

## Don't want me to talk

You don't want me to talk about  
Mining or its impact on Country  
You don't want me to talk about  
The concept and construct of 'whiteness'  
Its dominance and power in society  
You don't want me to talk about  
The art vultures here and everywhere  
Modern day missionaries  
Saving us on the great white canvas  
You don't want me to talk about  
Invasion of this land or a Treaty  
It's a shared true history – let's heal  
You don't want me to talk about  
Past injustices, cultural cruelty, cultural genocide  
And the cultural pain that is left behind  
It's a shared true history – let us heal  
You don't want me to talk about  
How reconciliation could be the wrong word  
On its own and without truth  
You don't want me to talk about  
Native titles process being for the white man  
You don't want me to talk at all  
Most of the time – you have your 'exotic' pets  
You want me to nod, smile and listen to you  
And it doesn't really matter if I don't hear you  
You don't want me to talk about  
How I have got a voice  
And you don't listen

## Dream mine time animals

Contemporary mechanical dream mine time animals

Creating sacred sites for the future

Is what our kids will proudly tell

Their stories around the campfires

Of the mechanical snakes slithering across land

Creating new traditional pathways and song lines

Transporting hills and country to the coast

Filling the belly of monstrous steel fish

Vomiting our precious earth onto foreign shores

Contemporary mechanical mine dream time animals

Hills broken into millions of pieces

Deep cuts into the flesh of earth

Gaping wounds with polluted waterholes

Haulpak mechanical dream mine time animals

Moving defenceless country from country

The remnants of sacred sites given up for money

Man-made hills our children will claim as belonging

To country, tradition and culture

False hills they will weave into song lines

And cultural boundary markers

Dream mine time animal's destroyer of land

CPG

## Country rulers

In this country of milk and money  
And iron ore, iron ore  
Mining, mining and more mining  
Who are the real rulers of country?  
What does our voting really give us?  
We are sucked into some false sense of decision making  
But this club of country rulers  
Holding court are mainly white  
Several could have touch of the tar brush  
Australia is hung up on skin colour  
Closet skeletons are carefully guarded  
Especially the black kind  
Lands stolen from traditional owners  
Land protected for thousands not hundreds  
Thousands and thousands of years  
I forgot land was not owned before  
Society only existed at time of invasion  
Whatever existed before did not count  
They all have an Aboriginal story  
Entwined in their family history  
Of course – of bloody course  
Who do you think showed their  
Grandparents or parents this rich land  
Bullshit they stumbled across it one day  
They lived in harsh environments  
With the true land owners  
Then they stole it

CPG

## Selfish warriors

On one hand they want to fight  
To protect country and rights  
But with other hand they shake the  
Hand of resource cheque books  
What are they doing – for goodness sake?  
How much land they gonna let them take?

In one breath fighting for land  
In the other just letting it all go  
Like a little kid playing games  
Sulking in the sand pit – whimpering  
“Give me what I want and then you can ...”

*Dig it up*  
*Blow it up*  
*Crush it up*  
*Poison it up*  
*Ship it out*  
*Do what you want*

*Gimme money money money*  
*Car four wheel drive car*

Selfish warrior don't really care  
If once did that's gone into the air  
Polish the boots and iron the pants  
Ore iron ore iron the white man wants more

Groom the beard get ready to shine  
Selfish warrior now belongs to the mines

CPG

## Fe Fi Fo Fum

Fe fi fo fum

I smell a mining robot chum

Marching to the beat

Of the resource drum

Airport stampede of

Yellow, silver, orange, gold

Time with family, community,

Children now sold sold sold

Into planes to move about

To many mine sites no doubt

Barna being destroyed in WA State

Rolling in dough to fill their plate

Grinding the land to make this bread

Land protection and Aboriginal rights

The last thing in their heads

Greedy dirty mining dynasty's

Everything but money is very dead

Fe fi fo fum

Decked out in flouros

Here they come

I smell a mining robot chum

CPG

## Fluoro girl world

I am not a fluoro girl  
Living in a fluoro world  
Driving a big truck  
Making big mining bucks  
Loving the navy orange look  
Working for the mining crooks

*I'm not a fluoro girl  
I don't live in a fluoro world  
That life is not fantastic*

CPG



## Don't mine me

Don't mind me Australia  
I just don't care for mining  
And your colonial bulldust  
I think all the time about minding  
This land for the next generations  
Am I allowed to do that?

Your stole our barna, country, land  
And still stealing under the name of

*King*

*Queen*

*Government*

*Economy*

*Asia*

*PROFIT*

Don't mind me Australia  
While you are busy  
Sticking explosives everywhere  
Getting a hard on from blowing up land  
Pumping chemicals deep into mother  
Drip feeding our waters with poison  
Waving goodbye to animals and plants  
Contaminating all that you touch

Don't mind me and don't mine me

CPG

# Niagara Dam Poems: Eastern Goldfields Western Australia (Wongai Country)

## 1 FLOODWAYS IN DESERT

In the floodways  
where my grandmother  
played as a child:  
rare water on the edge  
of the desert hinted  
at in dry riverbeds,  
a great drier lighter hinterland;  
whitewashed red  
and orange sandstone,  
wagtails over the Rubicon,  
'the die is cast',  
gold and mines so deep  
they drowned.

## 2 REVAMPED

Against the grey skin  
of the dam wall,  
raised up  
from the brittle dry  
for steam-trains  
green water  
corrodes: under  
ledges, the underbanks,  
fairy-martins hangnest

where humidity  
encourages midgies  
to swarm, roo scats  
on the miniature cliffs,  
fires where circling  
has revamped  
pioneer myths.

### 3 ON THE DESERT SHORES

Moonscape sandstone  
on the shores of Niagara –

rose quartz  
apricot quartz  
scattered finds

(sheoaks warp as a rare front darkens over)  
smoothed but crumbling edges  
on edges, mandala succulent plants eating  
stone; the less we name  
desert plants troubled  
at gatherings of water,  
the more erosion  
backfills space,  
young grebe  
on what is now  
rippled blue-black surface,  
glancing at array  
of rock as another's geology.

#### 4 NIGHT PARROTS AFFRONT

The front that almost reaches  
this interior, wind driving hard  
from southwest to vibrate  
feathers of zebra finches  
in sensory overload,  
anticipation of rain event  
as heavens can-opener camper vans  
of the *Around Australia* crews,  
pipping them at posts.

Rain falls lightly  
and holding off  
                                absence  
is the night parrot  
affronting accomplices

here in force  
                                in the middle  
of a rare dark day  
though lightning against the glare.

JK

# The Salt Chronicles

## I ALONENESS

I realise: so often  
I write myself alone  
as if no one would go there  
for its own sake: they might  
for science, or surveillance,  
reflecting on their loss,  
the irony of making more land  
less arable, or maybe  
tree-planting.

I went there  
to enclose in an open-ended  
environment, where earth-cracks  
from the tearing were gateways  
to a journey: social  
misunderstanding at school,  
competitive sport,  
rivalry; centre of the earth.

The formation of a salt crystal  
is bridge and timeline to tether  
astronomy and forecasting,  
to mirror then encrust then paper the bones  
of rodents, small marsupials, birds:  
the familial breakdown.  
Of myself, I was sure:  
the tufts of survivor grass,

the resilient spiked trees  
stunted and wind-bent,  
sapphire on the edges and elevations,  
marsh grasses slung with Christmas spiders,  
stalked by plovers and herons.  
In the brine the tumbles of larvae,  
crustaceans that shouldn't have survived the salt,  
species created in a few seasons  
then lost.

## 2 SALT WRAITHS

Salt wraiths leave trails –  
salt breaking through clean ground.  
Where the salt saturates  
they are the white ache  
of pillars, arches, sheets:  
embedded as insect corpse  
or blown seed of wild oats.  
At night, they make  
a chemical heat.

Of no order,  
they connect with nothing but salt  
leaching up, or running  
underground passages:  
above, the owl strikes quick  
in its fearlessness,  
but flies below the moon  
hoping to swoop  
out of the wraiths' sonar-

blip, a clash of technologies,  
the wraiths emanating  
from the ground up,  
they take hold  
bit by bit,  
the owl complies  
digesting the mouse,  
the night's castings.

X-raying for animal and mineral presence  
written stages of sedimentary formation  
wraiths imagine they know  
others – have known song and conversation,  
charred criteria of fires; oil lines  
blurred in salt buffers, a slush  
of samphire crusting  
as dryness set dimensions  
in rip-up-marks to break it up,  
iterations of sheoak  
whispers, such small seedlings  
to get a hold, but if they do they flourish  
and serve to strain; in dispossessing  
wraiths might think they displace  
but dialogues about the feeding of the river  
by salt creeks that will drive out the serpent  
are persistent; it's the wraith's indifference  
I missed as a child wandering  
the first-degree sunburn  
and thinking hallucinations  
were prophets or ghosts; in the blaze of white  
I lost definitions; a long way north  
it's as if focus was made through Bradshaw

bothering to record when 17,000 years  
was a dynamic counterpoint  
in itself.

The air is fetid about the gullies' throat:  
the rubbish used to throttle  
erosion: they batter negatives  
against the resistant plates,  
these emanations of electrolysis,  
afterimages we pick up on  
when alone and receptive,  
further out in the blanks  
it sterilises.

### 3 MAPPING AND COMPANIONSHIP

Sketched on graph paper  
intended for school, red lines  
mark salt seams, blue lines  
hard clear water  
of gullies and creeks,  
green the algal displays  
inside their aquariums.  
In the drawing out  
so some might follow  
as nemesis said or echo  
in the mirror, or Diana  
perved on from afar by binoculars,  
or the memory of salt crackle underfoot  
the tinnitus that scratches and flutters  
like half-formed auditory



hallucinations; fight as much as we did,  
my brother and I would go out there in maps  
of our ulterior making, and 'own' what cousins  
'owned' by right of family, and 'own'  
the fragile nature of the eroding  
footholds, lines of wash  
from paddocks still yielding  
good crops though closer  
to granite cap-rock  
year in, year out,  
marked on bedheads  
by brass shell casings,  
sharp lights like the green-gold glow  
of navigation markers  
dropped by passing aircraft.

#### 4 CONTRARY

I cannot look at salt  
on the crumbling winter roads  
of Ohio without it causing  
dislocation, a deep disturbance  
in what might happen,  
a shifting of sensibilities,  
a fraught transaction –  
even pain.

The salt that hardens arteries,  
the salt whose lack has the shearer crippled  
on the shed floor, kicking like a wether.

The agistment of salt mines  
and the way sweat and blood  
dissolve with history: the paranoia  
that says underneath it all  
must be holes in the text,  
Macherey's unconscious urge to  
see the oppression of salt licks,  
sheep huddled around the drum,  
cobalt in their bellies,  
manipulating salt taxes,  
the market value,  
salerium argentium,  
the enforced purchase of salt  
by children eight years or over,  
straddling ant trails  
reaching into dead zones  
where insects drop  
from airspace  
and are collected,  
collated.

#### 5 SALT PANS AT DAMPIER: COMPANY SEMI-FACT SHEET

It takes 18 months  
to put the salt  
through  
its evaporative cycle.  
Algae are 'contained'  
by milkfish  
bred to scour the ponds,  
to run the mirrors

of sunshine that turn  
sight inside out.  
Dampier Salt = Rio Tinto 65%  
Marubeni 20%  
Nissho-Iwai Ltd 10%  
Itochu Corporation 4.5%.  
They enjoy the nearby  
gas deposits, the export of iron ore  
through the heaviest tonnage-  
capable port in Australia.  
The salt ponds = 100 square kilometres.  
Magnesium sulphate,  
magnesium chloride,  
potassium chloride.  
World price for bromides  
not adequate.  
My father managed the workshop  
keeping the belly dumping trailers  
for the giant salt trucks –  
and the Kenworth  
prime movers themselves  
in good working order.  
Management, he wasn't Union,  
but respected Union labour  
well enough, but 'not the blokes who'd  
go out at the drop of a hat ...'  
he tells me this twenty-six  
years later – knowing I'd be Union  
as the salt drives his blood pressure,  
hijacks his sarcasm.

JK

## Red Lead, Almost Dead

Lead tetroxide bold as ... lead  
in the lab, my lab, my phase transition  
of poisoned exploration, discovery.  
Bought from Selby's in the big jar,  
enough to make a crystal palace, kookaburra  
feature window portal out of the gabled  
house, but mainly for completion (a *collectable*),  
the danger, addition to the hellzone  
of thorium nitrate and mercury (mobs  
of sheep don't 'split like mercury'; they are  
broken and forced apart, made to rejoin,  
to-meld again). Or crucibles of pure lead,  
lustrous liquid for sinkers, bullets  
(reloading one's own), the vapour haze, dumbing  
down as bright spark focuses the Bunsen's  
flame and draws all in, organic and inorganic  
testcase, what's left is the shame, splitshot  
chomped onto line, wire-snipped flex  
off the great rolled sheet, a wad of dull  
grey chewing gum. Lead light, lead  
unwrapped from yellowcake, the play  
of radiation and decay, the age-old  
age of earth, signifier of longevity  
you won't enjoy, complete, as body  
at least. But red lead, magnificently  
useless in the shed lab (ah! the Mettler  
balance!), glows and sits heavy  
on the shelf, begging to be mixed  
with anything that will change its outlook.

Fuming acids. Hydrochloric dissolve  
in the gut as well. Try everything. Make dissolve.  
This the legacy, the effect. Resolve,  
colour code. Dull red throb. Dead red lead.

JK

## Histories

*My mother taught us respect.  
The conversation has never ended.*

1

When the stokers  
Came in from the Reserve  
I was tasked with taking  
The water out during smoko –  
Kids my own age reached out  
To take the sky from my hands,  
Or to give it to me, which they did.

2

My memories  
Aren't like anyone else's, mostly.  
Though they overlap with my brother's  
A lot – he was also unseeing  
The world we were taught at school,  
And he was listening askew,  
Looking closer, knowing  
Where not to go.

3

The imagists cut things back  
To bare essentials – but here,  
I take the essence of the bush  
And make false claims  
If I turn a bird into an image,  
Co-opt its names.

4

Working the wheatbins  
At Mingenew I heard  
A white South African  
Truck driver and a bunch  
Of the local white boys  
Were going to shoot up  
A 'tin shack' on the edge  
Of town late at night.  
I tried to stop them –  
They ran me out of town.  
I hid in the bush till daylight.  
They drove around searching.  
Managed to hitch a lift to Perth.  
Heard they went on their  
Hunting spree unopposed.

I swap letters  
 With a relative  
 Doing time – he tells  
 Me he reads my words  
 To his cellmate who is Noongar.  
 He says my letters bring them comfort.  
 He from the distance of inside,  
 Me from the distance of outside.  
 All of us trying to say something  
 About imprisonment, its legacy.

My father's house 'Up North'.  
 His politics of the mines,  
 Of management in the trucking  
 Division. Those mechanics  
 Working under him, the politics  
 Of labour. As teenagers  
 We travelled to Millstream  
 With him and saw light in rock:  
 Not reflections, but the secret  
 Sought by the rapacious,  
 Sought out so hard but never found –  
 They disappear mountains  
 And turn them into cars.



7

There was a carved emu egg,  
A boab nut etched with fire,  
And, believe it or not,  
'An Albert Namatjira'  
Hanging in the lounge room  
Alongside the footy pennants.  
You couldn't say those folk  
Were anything but white fellas,  
But under the murk of their talk  
Something was happening –  
Something in need  
Of conversion.

8

The new kid from southern USA  
Who said, 'I've plenty of experience  
Fighting blacks where I come from.  
I know what to expect, let me at them.'  
Weirdly, he had a kind of sick respect  
In his racism, believing in the quality  
Of the opposition, seeing the world  
As two-toned shoes designed  
For stomping.

9

Language and the bush –  
We heard the words and knew  
Poetry as an artform  
Was intended to make up  
For what was lost in the taking.

Language and the bush –  
The words weren't just lists,  
They went into the essence  
As we searched nature guides  
For explanations they didn't have.

10

The Golden Gloves boxer  
Watched over us when we  
Arrived in Carnarvon  
From Geraldton. The  
White fellas here  
Drink and prey  
On their own.  
He said. He said.

11

Thanks you mob  
For giving me a roof  
To sleep under

When no one else  
But my mother  
And brother  
Would give me  
The time of day.  
I said I'd never  
Forget it. I said,  
Uncle, I did, I said,  
No bullshit, I promise.

12

Vigilantes  
Gather  
At the edge  
Of the Super Pit – dug  
Out to undermine  
Their own footing.

Burrowing deep,  
Extracting gold  
To make it no more  
Than bullion – the veins  
Of the earth  
Uprooted.

And the killer  
Goes off-site,  
Chases a kid  
To his death.  
And the earth  
Cries out of the dry,

And the vigilantes  
Block their ears.  
And the elegies  
Fill the streets.  
And the Pit eats itself  
Twenty-four hours a day.

JK.

## Hawes – God's Intruder

I

The church Hawes made in Mullewa  
was great in its stone and earth.  
The white folk praised its God-  
shape out in the hot zone.  
He got a lot of credit.  
A lot of praise.  
His altar had believers  
kneeling on ants.  
Red-tailed black cockatoos  
sat on its edges. Visitors  
didn't know their names.

JK

2

Galloping in, bible and cross in hand  
Hawes, God's intruder  
Altar stone of the earth  
Intruding on our barna  
In the name of Catholicism  
Bow your head and conform  
For this is now the whiteworld  
Hawes, God's intruder  
Onto our barna  
A campsite – home

A place of living  
A place of our ceremonies  
Long before it was  
called Mass Rock  
Hawes, God's intruder

CPG

3

Coming in from the 30,000 acres,  
eyes fixed on the ornate structure,  
as if two towns – or more – divided  
like the biblical sea, shearing teams  
drinking the red fleeces away.

Not our church, someone said,  
and we wondered, as Dad  
got his supplies of beer  
from the Railway Hotel,  
his hands oily from the dual-wheeled tractors,  
burnt from working in the superphosphate shed,  
the fog of occupation over the fortunes of country,  
not his, not the millionaire's  
whose farm he managed.

That priest, England in his veins,  
converted the midwest diocesan vision  
of souls gathered under one-roofs.  
A Spanish breeze drawn  
under the arches. Mt Carmel.

Where? Romanesque?  
What did he write: 'My heart  
is in these stones'? His European  
heart? His heart of ... home?

And we as kids, outsiders,  
jumping from one side of the tracks  
to the other. *The Mullewa*,  
train to Perth, discontinued  
a few years earlier.

JK

4

Living on the Mullewa fringes  
Became my people's place  
When a colonial township emerged  
Like a pimple in the wildflowers

Foreign church structures rose  
Dominating the landscape  
Family showed me the quarry  
From which rocks were taken  
Building the Whiteman's worship place  
Mullewa Reserve nearby  
Along the Mullewa – Morawa Road  
Aboriginal hands helped build that temple  
Their energy and sweat is in them rocks  
Their heart is in them rocks  
Hawes didn't do it on his own

Wonder if that is written anywhere?  
As a child I peered into that  
Curious why gargoyles watched the entry  
Frightened to look at the statues inside

Our playgrounds included train tracks,  
Wheat silos, the Common and looking into the dam  
As local kids we would  
Peer through the dam's big wire fence  
Thinking of our family who died in there  
We were told not to forget them  
The sadness in family voices  
Inside the dam was a no go zone

Wildflower season meant tourist buses  
We chased from Our Lady of Mt Carmel  
To the Lesser Hall for the promise  
Of leftover sandwiches and cakes.

CPG

5

On the steps of the Big Church  
I hesitate, unsure of what's inside  
for me. I have the sand and wheat  
ships in my head, and wonder  
how far they might stretch the scene.

Mum is a teacher at the high school,  
and my nickname there is Dictionary.



I write poems in a laboratory.  
I work weekends and holidays  
in the shadows of the mineral sands  
factories, preparing samples  
that show the quality of the land  
pouring through the capitalist  
hourglass, shifting the spirit  
to metals and plastics and paint.

It was rocket science. The birds  
stayed away and their songs  
ignored by too many. Shifting  
sands. Gunslits in settler buildings.

We ride our bikes from town  
to Drummond's Cove where crayfish  
bristle below and reef sharks  
patrol the gaps, snapper glinting,  
brightening the underworld.

We live opposite the prison  
in a limestone house – colonial mansion –  
once home to nurses,  
taken over by the Education  
Department, a statement of possession  
we know is haunted, distressed.  
We weather a cyclone,  
we find old coins fallen  
through the wooden boards.

We are part of something  
we can't quite piece together.  
Mum volunteers to teach prisoners  
written English, to listen to their lives.

Now, where house and yard  
and Moreton Bay fig stood,  
is Coles Shopping Centre  
carpark.

Down from there, trains  
rounded on themselves,  
head-to-tail on the turntable,  
and the sea against the seawall,  
and the curve of beach  
reaching to St George's  
(what did he have to do with it?)  
and the cobbler's sting that undid  
my nerves and had me shrieking  
the agony of Champion Bay  
I didn't understand. The school  
was busy re-enacting Grey's  
expedition but I knew  
that wasn't part of my vision,  
though later I'd rewrite it  
as a poem of decolonisation.

When I return to Geraldton,  
to what part of me is there,  
I rest in a dry creek bed  
and listen to the river redgums,

I go to the bottomless pool  
and watch the swallows  
defy gravity. I know sunsets  
make a coast and I listen  
hoping my errors  
will find redress.

JK

6

Growing up I lived opposite the Catholic Church  
Our Lady of Mt Carmel in Mullewa  
Every day I walked past Monsignor's house  
I knew nothing of their beliefs and customs  
It was just a playground to take pictures  
Get a cool drink from the water fountain  
The gargoyles perched at the entrance  
Frightened me at night as I closed my eyes  
And sprinted past the church to get home  
I didn't understand why these monsters  
Were on a church building roof –  
Looking out of place

During the celebrated wildflower season  
We would cute little Aboriginal kids pose  
For the tourists as we waited for rewards  
Of cakes and sandwiches leftovers from  
Their morning and afternoon teas  
They probably felt sad for us – who knows!  
We just got our feed and waved to them

I wrote poems and stories in a little diary  
You know the ones with lock and key  
And cute teenage girly covers  
Each time finding new hiding places  
From intruding little relatives and the rest  
Each time having to tear up and throw away  
My words, thoughts, emotions, feelings  
Because there were no hiding places

The big church in Geraldton on the sand hill  
Was not part of my world in Mullewa  
Our SDA church sat staunchly  
On Maitland Road waiting for its family  
We got bags of Weet-bix, oranges, and apples  
Saved us from really starving so  
That's something I guess

But that big church in Geraldton  
What a poser standing there like a temple  
My mum went to a wedding there in the 1940s  
An Aboriginal Catholic wedding at that  
I have a pic of mum leaning on church outside wall  
All young beautiful and a tea maid  
Mum had a permit to work in Geraldton  
At West End of Marine Terrace  
From the Native Protection Board  
Or should I say her Employer had the permit  
That's the way it was – Aboriginal people  
Were controlled and couldn't move freely

As a teenager going across to the  
Aboriginal Basketball carnivals  
Or at the Maitland Park footy oval  
I don't recall the Big Church

Later I moved to Geraldton  
And the Big Church was in my face  
I drove past it, I walked past it  
I stared at it from the  
Queens Park Theatre lawns

And what learned about it made me sick  
The space it so grandly took over  
Was once a traditional campsite  
The Aboriginal people were  
Moved to other locations like  
Moore River Native Mission  
Social engineering of our people  
And colonisers land grab take over  
Is said to have happened at same time

Oh yes the Big Church is grand  
They pray and worship their god  
Tourists come from everywhere  
With their cameras to make memories

All I can think about when I see it  
Is of the campsite taken over  
Of our people displaced and alienated  
From traditional country  
Colonised space it became and stayed

CPG

The night I was beaten so badly  
the cops and ambulance arrived  
at the Geraldton Drives to carry  
me away from my comfort zone,  
I gained a weird respect from  
a Yamaji guy who stood watching  
while a white boy who hated  
my guts pounded my head  
into the bitumen, chips of blue  
metal lodging in my scalp  
like a sick halo lit-up by  
the flickering images  
of The Who's 'Pinball Wizard' –  
*Tommy* playing on the big  
screen like out of control  
dreams and imaginings.  
The Yamaji guy said  
to his white associate,  
You better stop, mate,  
(there was only the mateship  
of being out at night and searching  
for action in the dead rural suburbs,  
the beaches just too far away  
to catch the echoes of waves)  
he said, There's too much blood,  
you can't even see his face  
it's so messed up. It's mush.  
I heard him speak as cars  
of whites sat watching,  
without losing a beat,

the 'crazy flipper fingers',  
and the guy doing the punching –  
a schoolmate – got a few extra  
in and then gave it away,  
my brother screaming,  
restrained by others  
in the group – the gang.  
That beating changed my face  
and my life. I'd climbed over the fence  
with my brother and a friend,  
and spread a blanket up front  
with a speaker next to us,  
swigging green ginger wine.  
We'd offered the boys  
who'd come in the same way  
from a different angle,  
a drink. Then the Dictionary-  
teacher's-son-stuff came out  
and it turned bad. When the cops  
wanted names they weren't interested  
in the white kid who'd done  
the damage, but wanted to know  
if there'd been any 'black bastards'  
in the gang. I said no, just whites,  
and didn't name names. For some reason  
I wondered if they were pines  
planted alongside the drive,  
inland, to hide the screen.  
What sort of trees are they?  
I asked, and the cops thought  
I had brain damage. I still  
can't remember, though

my brother lived for years  
near where the old screen had stood,  
and I looked in, trying  
to reconfigure. Years later,  
the Yamaji guy saw me and said,  
You're a legend, bro – we –  
*we* – know you didn't tell the cops  
anything. I know you kept me out of it.  
If you hadn't, my whole family  
would have paid and would still  
be paying. In your name crimes  
beyond imagining would  
have been committed.

JK

8

Aah I remember the sickly taste  
Of green ginger wine  
Sitting in the tall grass sipping  
Or on the hill behind the Club Hotel  
Yarning about young girl things  
Giggling, getting light headed  
Now I ask myself  
How did 13-year-old girls get grog?  
Where did we even get the money?  
Can't remember; all I know it happened  
And I seen some pretty good smashes  
Across on medicine square  
You know real fights



Back then when fair fights happened  
Fights were picked up at sun up  
To satisfy someone's need to be satisfied  
Not this mobbing bar rushing shit  
With gings, bottles and stones  
Or the kicking in the head business  
I seen men and women take it away  
Clean and fair and with handshakes  
White kids not in our sight  
I think they had their own craziness  
happening elsewhere in town  
They really weren't my concern  
My space was quite a blackout  
If you know what I mean  
A few of the Yamaji girls from the reserve  
Looked out for me – never forgot that  
That kind of respect lasts a lifetime  
Even when they died far too young

CPG

9

We were in Northampton recently  
and families were sheltering from the sun  
under shop eaves – we crossed the road  
to study the gothic of Hawes' St Mary's  
in Ara Coeli and his Sacred Heart Convent  
and then back across to where the old tennis  
court brooded and now native vegetation  
has been planted as if it was never there

in the first place. I think of the Tennis Court Oath, the meeting of the Third Estate locked out by Royalty, their pledge to meet until a constitution was drawn-up and I imagine a *Serment du Jeu de paume* at Northampton as the town's stone buildings summon the lead ore from the ground to contaminate so much further than the strongest eye can see, and I think of the t-shirt you designed now hanging in the Geraldton Maritime Museum where the white woman selects the little one in the middle but any one will do! her own revolution in taste and vanity, in ownership and protection and doing them a favour rewriting of love and family, as architecture is to poets and spiritual tourists, to miners and collectors of Australiana. Then I am back thirty-seven years doing the school marathon trials up behind Geraldton Senior High – up into dunes beyond Shenton Road, down to the back beach where time rips apart certainty, sandshoes slipping in sand, and back past what I now know is Hawes' Hermitage, built in 1936 for his retirement before he retreated to Cat Island in the Bahamas ... but we knew it as the 'place where weirdos live', a haunted hellish place we jogged past fast, where bullies pushed you closer and a face never defined peered at you from

the unnatural window in its gabled roof.  
I read now its design was influenced  
by the Arts and Crafts movement  
of his home country, that it's what  
architects call 'Inter-war Old English  
style', and that it is a national treasure.  
Our fear, the unspoken poisoning  
of water by lead disturbed in the ground,  
the stripped paddocks surrounding Northampton,  
the surveying and renaming and theft  
of bodies and souls are not treasures.  
Families were sheltering from the sun  
under shop eaves, and I swore  
a non-violent oath where  
the tennis courts  
had played their role.

JK

10

Hawes' stone piles Mooniemia placed  
Tidiness of a town – village with rolling hills  
Standard creek for frogs to amuse  
Hawes' Mooniemia stone construct  
Forcing eyes to look upon its face and body  
Like a sulking teenager demanding attention  
out of place and knowing it  
Fleeting glances from car windows  
Is as close as I ever got  
I imagine white ghosts of the pasts

Doing all the things White people do  
Conforming to the rules of their society  
I also wonder if Aunty (RIP) went in there  
Hawes stone pile stamping Nhanda land for the settler  
Where did the stones come from?  
I think what our old people told us  
'Dont take that rock or stone from there  
Leave it don't take it away – no good'  
Hawes with his religious amour  
Quarried wherever he wanted so  
That people will speak his name forever  
To ensure fame is bestowed for the  
Stone constructs strategically placed  
The Yamaji architects with the clay and mud huts  
Placed on the same land pre settler times  
Are forgotten, not talked about, ghosts  
Explorer Grey did document for us to find  
To remind people of the first architects here  
The Nhanda, Naaguja, Amangu, Nhanagardi  
Whilst Hawes' stone piles cry out for attention  
Throughout the Midwest and Yamaji areas  
I feel sad about that – he will always have  
His society's religion, a fan club of architects  
Whilst our Yamaji culture and history is still  
Not celebrated or appreciated for its place on the land  
How can over 50,000 yrs mean nothing?  
I wish our people's constructs could have been  
National Treasures instead of on pages in  
Surveyor accounts of land good to steal and claim  
As a teenager in Mullewa I ran home past  
Our Lady of Mt Carmel – this was my marathon  
After school every day for many years

A fast sprint at night thinking of the gargoyles  
With their wings and ugliness coming to get me  
They played their role in keeping us out

CPG

## Bottlebrush Behind Our Lady of Fatima Church, Nanson, Chapman Valley

Shriven with late afternoon rift-light? Sun levelling  
the already levelled hills, honeyeaters and inland thornbills  
raging around purple stone, and the Bishop calling Hawes

out as a difficult man, who once crossed could 'cut you dead'.  
This resonates in deadly ways, and since working with Charmaine  
on this array of monuments tapped into the region, such

concentrations of God, I can't help think that the birds are re-  
consecrating the eroded rock and sand beneath our feet, stirred  
by wings beating discriminately. Family photograph each other

under the bloody rills of bottlebrush flowers – capillaries  
of an anatomy we track with borrowed knowledge, but with a shudder  
as prayers shake down the land into farms and a cradle

of wheat, a crucible – and the ECHELON communications base  
playing realpolitik lies – secrets of gross exploitation by clusters  
of atomic warriors. And there's a droning in the air that resists

dispersal by sea-winds, from windmills spinning back  
against their driving force. 'Surreal' – a trendy, easy word  
that's seeped into the present and gets a working-over,

just like 'uncanny' – insists on being spoken, an intrusion that sends  
the bungarra shooting off into the scrub as we prompt it to leave  
the road. All of this, all of these conflation in the valley

where Hawes is still lauded, where the bottlebrushes roots  
test the soil to see what's *really* changed, where the dead are cut out  
of the imagery and a miracle is channelled to cement the gaps.

JK

## Honey to Lips Bottlebrush

Young teachings perched on Walkaway hill  
Space reclaiming decolonising respacing  
Bottlebrush explosive red inviting eyes  
Honey to lips or bush cordial sweet

*Honey to lips bottlebrush*

*Kneeling at altar of God no*

*Not on this land not here*

Hawes-centricity another world away  
Archived Greenough 12 kilometres west  
Appetite not here for Hawes' mudpie  
Young thirst for knowledge Yamaji

*Honey to lips bottlebrush*

*Hawes turned wooden candlesticks*

*Ghosts sit at Centro Greenough*

*Not on this land not here*

Sucking nectar bottlebrush sweet  
Wattle seeds eating tasting time ago  
Visions of firesticks ancestors' walking  
Tracks etched into land across land

*Honey to lips bottlebrush*

*Red fire dotted campsites*

*Culture banished torment real*

*Wheat grain money worshipped*

*Not on this land not here*

Dance ground feet sand reunite connect  
Still wind still ancestors come to visit  
Gentle kiss giving to young spirits



Reassuring for the onward journey  
Right here on this land right here

CPG

## Our Lady of Mt Carmel, Mullewa

*'Mons. Hawes had a great affinity with the Aboriginal people of Mullewa but they were not comfortable in attending Mass in the local church.'*

[http://www.monsignorhawes.com.au/thebuildings\\_mullewaoutlady.html](http://www.monsignorhawes.com.au/thebuildings_mullewaoutlady.html)

We had to go back home that way, past the church  
Hawes built stone by stone, as the colonial myth goes.  
We had to go back home that way, because Mullewa  
*isn't* the church, but the place where people live  
across many conversations, and country isn't a cross  
or a survey marker.

We had to go back home that way, though I can't  
visit the farm my father managed because it doesn't  
seem right – wreath flowers on the roadside attracting  
the wildflower visitors, though fencers have taken  
out so much of the roadside vegetation the wreaths can't  
benefit from disturbance. Erasure.

We had to go back home that way, past the Marian  
projection into the 'region', beaming out towards  
the stony ground further and further – from the coast  
*inland inland* following railway, road trains, the mucking  
around in the school playground. All of that  
making the town, community.

We had to go back home that way to decode  
our reasons, their irrelevance, the damaging. While  
up on the caricature Romanesque tower – colonial theatre  
of cruelty – a kestrel tracks martins fast off the eaves  
while a bottlebrush sheds red we might, if we try, see as angry –  
not gargoyle warding-off, but kestrel drawing in.

We had to go back home that way, wondering  
about the legacy of architecture, the caretaking  
of affinity.

JK

## No other road

Home is back that way, there is no other  
Mum's bush camp childhood home in sight  
No need to drive there unless you belong  
Mum shared water stories – having to cart it  
Government well about two kilometres away  
No house with tap running water for a  
Cool drink on a hot Mullewa summer's day

Mass Rock is the intruder in our space  
Mass Rock is not my significant site  
My people's campsite not Hawes' space

Home is back that way, there is no other  
Great grandmother buried along Mullewa north  
Pioneer cemetery flattened by some idiot  
Erasing evidence of topsoil markings  
Final burial place of our Murgoo Elder

Mass Rock is the intruder in our space  
Mass Rock is not my significant site  
My people's campsite not Hawes' space

Home is back that way, there is no other  
Man-made temple like peacock stands  
Marker of a civilised yet uncivilised world  
A space for those to pray their sins away  
Under the watchful eyes of icons and statues  
Like civilised colonial pagans with gargoyle guards

Mass Rock is the intruder in our space  
Mass Rock is not my significant site  
My people's campsite not Hawes' space

Home is back that way, there is no other

CPG

## I don't like flying over

I don't like flying over Wadjemup  
On the flight path to Geraldton  
It doesn't comfort me looking down  
Over the island others call Rottnest  
I always scan the distance from mainland  
Thinking of long ago in draconian times  
Western Australian Aboriginal men sent here  
Trapped 11 miles away from walking paths home  
Forced to mine limestone to build a jail from hell  
Chains around necks and roped together  
Locals talk about Rotto, quokkas and Tentland  
One can sleep on top of unmarked graves  
This is not a holiday island  
It's a prison memory of shootings  
Hangings, drownings, measles, influenza  
Such cruel colonial practices inflicted on our men  
There cannot be a masterclass in amnesia  
We must continue to remember  
To honour the men who died out there  
It is not a holiday place  
No matter how much prettied up  
Lots of spirits still there on Wadjemup

CPG

## Wildflower Singing

Like a feast laid out  
On a long table in  
Front of me  
My eyes welcome  
The sight of my  
Ancestral lands  
Singing in wildflowers

CPG

## Culture Bath

Immerse yourself in your culture  
Let it wash over you  
Bathe in it like you would  
A bath filled with flowers  
Let it flow into every  
Cell of your being  
Your culture will hold you  
Your spirit will rejoice  
Let you culture hold you  
And never be a bystander  
Don't look the other way  
Don't be an observer  
Embrace your culture with open arms  
For it is your belonging

CPG



## I won't pretend

I won't pretend it's easy  
Living in an intercultural space  
Cultural clashes and tensions  
Bounce and collide  
And sometimes explode  
Trying to make sense  
Of our ways of knowing  
Of our ways of being  
I won't pretend it's dull  
Because it is not  
It's so intense but culturally  
Inspiring – rewarding  
Reflecting on two cultures  
How our lives are shaped  
Not letting one culture take over  
Finding time to walk over  
Each other's barna

CPG

## Campfire

A campfire binds us  
Swapping yarns  
Silly ones to make us laugh  
Serious ones about our people  
Sharing ones about our cultures  
We share this space  
Yamaji to Maori to Yamaji  
Happy, content, relaxed together  
We know it's not like this  
In other parts of Australia  
The youth fight each other  
The newly arrived want to fit in  
For a better life and nice life  
So take on attitudes of white Australia  
Do they know what they do  
To the First Peoples of this barna?  
Of course not everyone is like this  
We carry on sharing our space  
Knowing our space and our place  
As Indigenous peoples  
Sharing bacon bones and kangaroo meat

CPG

## Tangi

The sadness we share  
As I help prepare your mother  
For the undertaker  
It's not our way but it seems so natural  
I have been with dead family before  
But in the hospital ward  
I know death very well  
Just not at home – not this way  
You tell me this is your people's way  
The undertaker will bring her back  
In a few hours to her family and home  
Before her final journey from physical world  
You tell me to join everyone  
Come sit down on the mattress  
Near the casket where she sleeps  
Sing a song, tell a yarn  
Shed a tear, sit and reflect  
Or just be there  
I wonder if her spirit is watching  
This is not my way for three days  
But it seems so natural, respectful  
Comforting, cultural, right, protecting  
But as night starts to creep in  
My Yamaji mind starts to tell me other things  
What spirits will come  
Under this cover of darkness  
Will they be good or bad?  
Will they recognise me?  
Will my spirit be weakened?

Who will protect me so far from  
My barna and people?  
In this land of the long white cloud  
You tell me to join everyone  
To sleep in this space  
To be there with your mother  
I tell you I am not disrespecting  
I tell you this is not our way  
Who will protect my spirit  
In this far away land?  
The sadness we share

CPG

## Yamaji Culture

Yamaji culture

It's a culture worth loving

It's a culture worth fighting for

It's a culture worth being loved

Why tell me I don't need it?

Why tell me I can't need it?

Why tell me I can't love my culture?

Why tell me it's not worth fighting for?

Why tell me it's not worthy of love?

Yamaji culture

I love it – I laugh for it

I stress for it – I cry for it

I fight for it

I believe it is worthy

Of love and respect

Don't crawl into a

Dark corner of cultural nothingness

For your children

Grandchildren and descendants

Will blame you – blame you

For not caring enough

Or wanting your culture enough

Or loving and respecting it

Don't be that ancestor

I watch Yamaji culture change  
It adapts to survive  
Why don't you understand that?  
Why can't you understand that?

Yamaji culture is a culture  
Worth fighting for  
A culture worth loving  
A culture worthy  
Don't wipe all that away  
Hang on – hang on tight countrymen  
To our Yamaji Culture

CPG

## Lake Magic Resonances (January 2017)

for Tony Hughes-d'Aeth

1

Into the summer's flameless burn of night,  
residues – and housed in the radar dish  
of salt – such vast accumulations –  
reception almost non-existent,  
but hope rises into darkness  
as night gives to creatures  
outside the spotlight.

2

White branchings  
up out of the bed of lack –  
gypsum underlay, evaporate survey,  
in sea of coral tree, beach bums,  
and roots so deep they reach  
echoes no sea shell can mimic  
with fidelity – *inland, inland* –  
what is being said, what is being said?  
I like aloneness but not loneliness,  
and I call those who share  
the salt array psychology.

3

Don't forget the granite  
decay, the backyard radiation  
of the emergent wave,  
to wall water to reservoir  
where swans tell stories  
few hear. I climbed, too,  
examined by ornate  
rock dragons, and even  
a sandalwood decaying  
in a sunken island,  
gnamma hope.

#### 4 DRAINING FROM LAKE KING

Full-blown infrastructuring of salt.  
Harrowing out to channel away  
and make the river Camm  
thrive again, rock looming  
and its lizard eyes taking  
in so much salt heaped  
to break us down,  
preserve us, breathing  
with deadwood.

5

Overload of salt – breakout! –  
electrolytes of psyche



and weirdness of sleeping  
in banks and columns and sinkholes  
of salt to bring childhood back,  
a thirsty salivating for a lost world  
that is not lost was never lost –  
that propaganda of ‘emptiness’,  
of ‘possession’, out of focus.

6

Westerlies rush the failure  
of hydrography – waves  
on the lake and that warm-  
cool differential stirring  
memories not mine to have,  
and a shuddering of rafters,  
funnelling of bricks, and a denial  
of isolation even in the lee  
a rippling, a lifting of shallows  
where sands ply late light  
through gnarled trees  
and water-branches  
bristle a foreboding  
armour that lures  
with divination  
only I can make  
false – water is found,  
drink in what you can't drink.

The inland sea is rising  
 and the ship of state lists  
 and capsizes into the eye  
     of whirlpool.

Colour-shift rapid  
 as sun fading on voyages  
 to where discovery  
 was presence. Millennia.  
 A green carpet in dry euphoria.

    Qualities of light  
     shifting, slipping  
 across hot ice on decks.

## 8 WHO TO BLAME?

Morning is the gypsum shift  
 and visitors play in scalds.

Crunch! on effervescing mirages,  
 watched from a periphery

of crows, galahs, dusky  
 wood swallows. *Vut vut!*

Landcare as fences bloom  
 at bases orange-rose

sheets of grouting, slabs  
 of render – land's building

coming unstuck, and some  
claiming 'lifeless'. *Vut vut!*

I lake, I make lake of me  
when I really shouldn't –

compelled as the wind  
ruffles lee in memory

of last evening – all sun's  
setting ways enraptured

to bleach an easterly rising,  
And the old tracked machine

that would have its say,  
rusted to return in the broadest

sense (have you ever had to listen  
to farm or military machinery

working far into the night?),  
partial and immoderate –

once, in its day, it has its say  
and it was brine on the blade.

Bloody. *Vut vut!* Bloody.

## INTERLUDE

Tim would love it out here.  
Tracy would let distress and wonder  
mix and rest and intensify.

### 9 I REFUSE

I refuse to bend to form  
or to a prosody of certainty  
when all is vicarious.

Saltbush and pigweed  
rustle succulent against  
evisceration and the Camm

sighs over its naming  
and the slippage as the dry  
which lifts its salt to the wind

or grows spikes from deadwood  
left to seed. Saltbush replays.  
Salt polyphony, bristles.

Sadly, I understand. Sadly  
I gorge on the 'qualities  
of light'. Crystallography.

10 THE REVITALISING QUALITIES OF SALT 'WASTES'

A courting couple  
new couple  
couple on their honeymoon,  
a couple kicking up the salt splinters  
breaking through to the viscous  
soil beneath – it's their moment  
in the sun, all modernity's  
offerings compacted  
into their fun,  
the photos they take  
of one another,  
together.

11

I count syllables of salt,  
their slow-fast grieving,  
their incitements to love –  
the dancing couple  
waiting to capture  
their kicked-up fuss,  
their breaking through to land  
that will barely know them,  
through the corrosive mask –  
briefly vivid, briefly frolicking  
in the palaeochannel.

Over wave, arched,  
on a flared slope  
as sheoak enraptured  
with run-off still the residue  
annexed at the 'joint cleft '  
try not to look at the rockwork  
as an example of European art  
of the twentieth-century –  
that new colonial way  
in the claims to decolonising –  
just know there are other ways,  
and claim no more. Where  
the rock dragon shifting foot  
to foot says, What privacy  
am given, on the hunt  
for the unsuspecting.

Stay clear.

Don't deny.

Crystals

aren't *your*

fortune.

*Vut vut!*

*Vut vut!*

*Vut vut!*

JK

*I wish to acknowledge Phil and Len Collard, and the Collard family in general for their generous response to this poem in the context of my writing their country. In doing so, I acknowledge elders past, present and future of the Noongar Boodja I am writing.*

## The Artlessness of Internal Travel

Going away enforced where I was.  
There was no here without there.  
The Canning River fed Bull Creek  
overshadowed by paperbarks  
with its sharp white shore, a cul de sac  
fed from the Hills, up over the Scarp.

Or far up the coast, a new home,  
the Chapman River ate sandstone  
and bream in the pools spoke  
upstream language in their stasis.  
Away, was religious when religion  
was failing me, and I failing it.

Always heading Down South  
or Up North, a thread through  
a broken marriage, a string cord  
between family jam tins, I travelled  
to Wheatlands farm and its salt scalds,  
to the millionaire's farm near Mullewa  
managed by my father and his new wife.  
Then to the mining towns of the Pilbara.  
Later to a shack in a paddock  
on the edge of jarrah forest.



Shells, rocks, cutting of plants,  
the odd polaroid, lock-journals  
with sketchy notes of departure,  
arrival, incidents: Dad hit a roo  
not far out of Exmouth after  
the cyclone took the roof off  
our motel and we sheltered  
in the doorframe of the bathroom.

Driving throughout the night,  
unloading bricks at Koorda,  
then onto Merredin, more bricks ...  
and then sometime near dawn  
the truck off the road, brick packs  
broken all over. Swish of gear changes,  
hooking the button up alongside the shift,  
low, high ... a range of habitation  
as adversarial as bitumen,  
night punctured with headlights.

In the shothole canyon outside Exmouth,  
communications remixing my brain chemistry,  
its electricity, I got a sense of what it is  
to be alone and lost, to drink rock  
and dryness, take blue as emptiness.  
But to retract and embrace,  
and see the fullness of loss.  
I am still there, scant vegetation  
and presence I can now explain.

Long straights, towards arid zones.  
The Pioneer bus with my younger brother,  
the flat-tops, the mesas, the emollient of erosion,  
the leafiness of banana plantations around Carnarvon  
that seemed as artificial as flower arrangements,  
the pragmatic wish-fulfilment of tracking stations,  
the communities that wouldn't let us in  
but we hung around, hoping to travel  
where the car wouldn't take us, the Ampol  
and Golden Fleece travel paraphernalia  
guide us. Quasi-religious. Always quasi.  
Wanting to put something back.

And the salt ponds, evaporative vats  
granulated tissue of the iron industry,  
as hardcore porno sold to teenagers  
in supermarkets outwitted blue-ringed octopi,  
the tide rushing in over mudcrabs,  
swamping mangroves, cobbler lurking  
and queenfish out in the channels.  
If you behave, we'll drive out  
to the anomaly, Millstream.  
Water in the gorges contradicts  
the dry God you want to worship.  
Nothing is 'straggly' because writing  
is what I take to it: unwritten  
yet, a shimmering affirmation.

Later I would fly on MMA down to Perth.  
Filling the map, dragging coast into crops,  
a semi-literate overview. Returning with piles  
of books, Frank O'Hara made street corners  
of topography, silos sucked into his art.

But trips from the farm into a deeper wheatbelt  
were memories bereft of the anxieties of connection:  
salt scalds widening out beyond fences, speaking  
liminal against the grain, hot on the steps  
of the translocated, the driven-off.  
Further out, defences lowered,  
where wodjil tests granite  
and rock dragons press sun  
into mirrors and the hawk watches,  
I announced the crime. In whose footsteps  
I follow, and the marks I leave behind: so distinct,  
but empty, the yellowing spray-fringe at the edges.

And south, to the tall timber fantasy,  
stomping ground of my Irish ancestors,  
stomping down karri with vestiges of hunger  
and anger, the bitten homeland transference  
to lift selkies from king waves, conspire  
with the haves and fight off the have-nots  
they might become at any moment, travelling  
through wetlands where the old farm etched  
its way into the buried, tramped down bones.

Bits of language coming through, and straight past  
the houses of family I didn't know,  
family who knew the wide spaces  
between tuarts before the ships arrived.

Or where whales ended up in kettles  
and tanks – travelogue of family  
friendships – Carnarvon Whaling Station –  
grandfather in the spotter, and great white sharks  
off Cheynes Beach I intone, carry on about:  
but mainly the eternal south, the other blue,  
the depth outside ownership, despite all claims.

JK

## Edges of Aridity

*for the Adnyamathanha people*

'Arid' is relative to what grows  
in dry places, what thrives in its dirt, its stone,  
its air. When water flows here it flows fast,  
the rain beads on the surface, fuses  
and rushes. A river redgum catches the detritus,  
braces the collapsed, the lost, the leftovers.  
In its upper branches pink and grey galahs  
eye the deep and promising hollows.

When native pines were eaten by the mine's furnaces,  
edges shifted. As sheep found the shade of cassia –  
the 'wait a while bush' – the edges shifted. A town builds  
out of its gatherings, its edges. Moments even out  
between the hills, high above sea level, and heat  
is the thin edge of a conversation, emu  
and kangaroo shape the dry air, the movements  
of ants are the movements of mountains, and cicadas  
wait for the sun to set, to name the night's arrival.

The edge of town is near its centre, pepper trees  
complicate the shade which is always a pleasure – rabbits  
on bare slopes of evening kick dust as dry-place smoke.  
Out of this, the cemetery is an edge I know – it speaks  
to all places of the dead, inside and out. Quartzite, slate

and marble hold the dead down in the copper ground,  
but they break through constantly. A whirly whirly –  
vigorous, determined – crosses the road, a strong funnel  
lifting the scarce pickings of dry ground,  
concentrating. It crosses into the cemetery

and connects ground and sky, a spiral nebula  
of the dead, a whirlpool of the arid, as the wedge-tailed  
catch their thermals, and a rabbit, just out of range  
of the spiral, digs at a grave before stopping short  
of farmers, miners, and a priest, men, women, and children.  
The edges of a space full as sunlight, full of unmarked  
and unknown graves, reaching out over the fencelines,  
living with the living, part of country. Tin flowers,  
headstones bled of script, a fenced spread  
or a mine opening, the woodwork splintering  
in simulacra or realtime. The edge brought closer

as a garden drinks what's offered. How do we  
move on from our dead? And should we? Our days loud  
at the grave. Entry and exit, opened and closed. Ironwork,  
ironflowers, the polish of stone sheets, segments, steps.  
Early morning backgrounds the sounds of white-faced finches,  
spiny-cheeked wattle birds, sounds of hill outlines.  
No cemetery is silent. They are loud in the heads of locals  
and visitors alike. And the dead are loud in their graves.  
Edges are beginnings, not ends. I have seen the silhouettes  
of backlit ranges, the cracked edges of stars, the living places of the  
dead,  
the cutlines of flow, the edges of thermals and limestone  
and slag heaps, the needles of acacias and their seedpods

opening, hoping new growth will join the old,  
and know these edges are beginnings, not ends.  
I have heard the tawny frogmouth just out of reach  
of the town's lights and seen shadows move out from headstones,  
alive, edgy *and* stable, moving out over rock and faultline,  
lifting up from below ground flowing rich with aridity.

JK

Reconstruction of the *Foundation of Perth*  
1829, Painted by George Pitt Morison for the  
Centenary of 1929: a poem against ekphrasis  
for Kim Scott

And so it begins, the felling,  
the transfer of commodities;  
a shiny sheoak sewing box  
with brass hinges and nine  
compartments in royal blue velvet,  
a lure to Queen Mary who will bestow  
it back on the colonials: such grace,  
such cultural largesse.

Mrs Dance and the stone,  
Captain Stirling and the tree,  
Mrs Dance and the tree,  
Captain Stirling and the stone?

So the capital gains. Plenty  
of eucalypts and sheoaks  
and xanthorrhoeas went down  
for the count, as now  
with outer suburbs, the axe-blows'  
rings doing their decade by decade  
expansions. Soldiers for back up.

Levity and redemption,  
levering of stone,  
grubbing-out of vegetation,  
degradations of green



yellowing down to sand,  
to burn with summer's hunger  
for shade: buildings to replace  
the sheltering leaves. Official  
speech, pronouncement – enigmatic  
endowment, a leap of time  
and faith: erasure, insure.

Other women on board  
with birthrights (pregnant,  
suckling), so Mrs Dance shines  
bright: white flare of muslin  
as ancestral voices whisper  
through smudged leaves  
of light, colour, impression,  
needled foliage brushed out,  
zamas reaching out to botany  
underwriting discovery,  
attesting herbariums  
and all pressed flowers  
to traverse in letters,  
reading land as what's  
familiar in 'river' or  
brooding 'sky', figurative  
sizing of rank and file:  
the eminent, and who sees  
a hundred years into the future,  
and back further still,  
the figures the artist  
won't see, won't answer.

As once we sheltered  
in the Supreme Court Gardens  
between ficus trees and rampant  
palms, the law closing in  
and skyscrapers funnelling  
a vicious sea breeze.  
Reach into the basket,  
bottles and glasses,  
food from the Salvos.

'A swan and wild ducks'  
pass by', favours are done  
in the retelling: the centennial  
picture confirms what they  
want, what they've always  
known. This is just how  
it was. The city gets older  
and the paint is restored.  
I dreamt I was there: coming  
into the picture from nowhere.

Mrs Dance put an axe to me  
and the officials all partied  
hard long after. Why feel  
compelled to apologise  
for their behaviour, their joy?

The axeman in shirtsleeves  
takes over and finishes  
the job with a few well-  
aimed strokes. He thinks  
of Mrs Dance so near;  
I can sense this, being  
a heartbeat from both.

Mrs Dance, wife  
of the commander  
to the ship Sulphur,  
'persuaded to venture  
so far into savage country'  
will surely never  
be the same again.

JK

## Respect

Mum's friend says that her people know which of the white families in the district behaved decently and which didn't, and memory being what it is means that long ago or that far back doesn't erase anything, and the sins of the past are as much the sins of now as of the future; when the waterholes and river went salt the rainbow serpent choked up and slid off to find the little fresh water left, hidden in a clump of trees at the base of Mt Matilda, a place higher up than the salt though still brackish, collecting from the run-off, pausing between rocks before seeping down into the dead river; Mum's friend says that where Mum lives is 'Wendy's place', which is generous though surely ironic if taken out of context; and context is overwhelming though temporarily put to one side in any conversation in a car travelling to Beverley, passing Caves Road and looking up at the annealed path of the serpent, the cauterised antiphony of farmland, scars through the surveyor's mapping; as a child I recall passing the camp on the outskirts of town and asking, and asking I recall getting as close as possible to the stokers working hay on the farm, fencelines crossing their lines, as kids my age played away from me, in the shade – Ballardong people whose language expanded past English, whose language picked at English to help the farmers out, who filled in the linguistic geography

below the crop, below the ground where a creek started  
and whose song flows up to the dark, transforming  
out past the sparks of the fire, the notes of ants sleeping,  
cut it down like the brittle stalks.

In Northam the prophecies weltered against the hills  
and the protector rounded up people like songs  
of praise: Moore River and the absolution  
of Christ in the wafer of bread, broken  
over roads travelled against the grain;  
looking onto Walwalinj – hill that cries – is the slow  
whisper of volcanic residue, or hymns sung by local peoples  
and those come later, a tribal meeting place  
as much as any other, to some; the Nuns were good to us  
I heard someone say you said, but either way,  
it was a demolition of all values to others  
it was an electroshock of myth inversion  
and the choicest cuts of land  
were dished out for the taking.

Any rights I have over words I cede to you.

The descriptives or instructives  
are my damnation too: taking what heat we can  
from the electric light, pride in family  
achievements: great footballers in the family,  
a teacher who speaks across generations and dreamings,  
a right to live in the soil we should be buried in.  
From space, all the lines are visible: still there,  
glowing green and red and ochre, the blue water  
as alive as the stories of its awakening,  
its place in the hills, its place where kangaroos,  
snakes, lizards, and birds drink.  
It's clean water. The lines of walking are clear.

JK

## Nganayungu Yagu

Nganayungu Yagu  
My mother  
Belong to me  
Always told me  
Walk tall and strong  
Little Nyarlu me

Nganayungu Yagu  
My mother  
Belong to me  
Always told me  
Don't be afraid  
In any space  
This land is old  
Your ancestors' spirits  
Will protect you for  
They remember all those  
Who belong and  
Come from it

Nganayungu Yagu  
My mother  
Belong to me  
Now in that land  
Her spirit watches  
Over me  
As I move around  
On this our land

CPG

## Rain Clouds' Arrival

The arrival of rain clouds  
To be welcomed and embraced  
For the balance of life  
Is wrapped within  
Nature's way nothing else  
Precious rain to kiss  
The face of country  
Filling drinking cups of life  
Bringing presents to the cycle of growth  
And living bush foods flourish  
Wildflowers pop up to say hello  
Allowing the land to smile  
Moving deep over country  
To awaken the seeds  
To awaken the land  
To emerge within rain clouds  
Brings more than a sense of renewal,  
Refreshing and sustaining  
Tracks and memories  
Across the land  
Across the country  
Hold their place

CPG

## Lake Joondalup

Suburban disturbance  
Rooftops hurting the eye  
Messy on the skyline  
Evidence of another way  
Coloniser's villages  
Like sardines in a can  
Connected like caterpillars  
Crawling closer to the  
Lake's water edge  
I see birds together  
All kinds not moving  
Or looking at me the stranger  
A feeling in the air  
I can't quite describe  
Peaceful drawing me in  
Then making me  
Feel like an intruder  
So still so different  
To the urban noise  
Beyond the trees  
Lake Joondalup  
Waits for its people

CPG



## Old Girl

*For Julie Dowling*

Old Girl's eyes draw me on first sight  
Pulling me close into her presence  
I know Old Girl I seen her before  
My Aunty, my Nanna, my Cousin  
Her eyes have seen much  
The sadness and pain  
Wrapped tightly within the  
Coloniser's cruel practices  
Yet Old Girl stands firm  
Strong presence despite inside feelings  
Pushed deep into a place  
Where no one can use  
Enough has been done already  
To her and her people  
And her country in life  
Moving forward in life with  
Affection respect and loyalty  
From those who value her  
Old Girl is missed  
When those who have a need  
For her comfort, security, laughter  
Wisdom, guidance or just  
For being Old Girl in sight  
Her place has not been shifted  
Even if her country around her as  
Her place has just taken a detour  
She was there for them little ones  
Even though she may have lost her own

When they cried for mummy and daddy  
Old Girl gave them the strength to move  
Into the unknown life awaiting  
Her smile and mischievousness  
Delights the young ones and others  
For the harshness of the world  
Is softened, tolerable and strengthened  
With Old Girl around

CPG

## Blue Scar

To push aside the concrete  
Bitumen urban mess on country  
A cultural mindset continuing  
From old people to now  
And into the future  
For remember a  
Whiteman's presence  
And laying on country  
Does not cancel out or replace  
Beliefs, customs or values  
These transform in  
A physical sense to survive  
And re-emerge in some space  
In some mark or in some form  
To remind you of  
The strength and resilience  
Of a people belonging

CPG

## Simply Yarning

*For Dawn Bessarab*

Yarning is a beautiful conversation  
A time and space allowing  
Laughs, tears, happiness, anger  
Sadness, seriousness, joking  
Or nothing but relaxation  
Yarning could be slow  
Especially when a cuppa's involved  
It could be fast and furious  
Like a cascading waterfall  
Smashing to the bottom  
Hard, rough and dirty  
But hey it's worth it  
Yarning could be intense and complex  
Serene and beautiful  
Depends on how you extract  
What you want  
Or get what you don't want  
Yarning is a beautiful conversation  
From that moment  
That space  
That time  
Yarning puts us on common ground  
Hey come on Dawn let's have a yarn

CPG

## Yarn Response Poem

How can I but take up the call,  
Charmaine, and yarn right back at you –  
it's what we do when we connect,  
have a yarn about this and that,  
about versions of Gero the white stakeholders  
in the town would pile on us like we're  
all lucky having any part of it.  
And for me, a returnee or a blowback,  
my school years still showing  
me around the streets, under the thin  
shadows of tall Norfolk pines,  
ships masts, the offshoots of voyages  
of exploration and exploitation.  
All that, and family, and art  
and stuff. You know, we went  
into the Yamaji Art gallery  
and bought a couple of paintings  
for our son Tim, because they meant  
so much to him, the artist also  
a teenager, following in her father's footsteps,  
and then on to the Julie Dowling  
exhibition in the Town Gallery  
that you curated. That was powerful  
and moving and the costs of work  
were like the sea stirred and heard  
deep inland. All that, all those stories,  
and the women in the Yamaji gallery  
saying they knew my brother, Stephen  
the muso-artist-surfer-shearer

who loves people, who lives  
as much outside capitalism  
as anyone I've ever known.  
You know him too, and he knows  
you, and we all feel good about that.  
This is yarning, too, Charmaine,  
and I take my cue from you  
and celebrate the back & forth,  
even a bit of overtalking!

JK

## Third Space

Come grab my mara  
I dare you come on  
What you're not sure  
Not sure diversity exists  
Not sure diversity is healthy  
'We are one ... we are Australian'  
Crikey turn it off – if you are not sure  
Beautiful at school assembly  
But everyone will grow up  
To see the difference  
To see the diversity of cultures  
Voices, opinions, attitudes, interpretations  
Come on grab my mara  
I dare you – come on  
See that space over there  
It's a third space where we might get on  
me space + you space = third space  
Oh it's scary alright  
Fluid, moving, unsure of what's there  
But that's the one space we can  
Find common ground  
It is somewhere we can  
Both own the space  
Both share the space  
To exist, grow, move forward  
To move forward  
It's the only space  
We can find genuine common ground  
Everything else is bullshit

Come on I dare you  
Grab my hand  
We can discard our  
Protective robes of  
Biases, superiority, stereotypes  
Oh yes don't look surprised  
We both own those robes  
You wear yours when you  
Call me a black multhu, a gin, a black bastard  
I wear mine when I call you a  
White invading convict land grabbing multhu  
Oh yeah we both got those robes  
But that space over there  
Will allow us to take off the robes  
And stitch a new robe  
To wear and heal together  
On this land we both call home  
What you're still not sure  
Come on grab my mara  
I'll just wait for you over there  
For when you are ready

CPG



## Ngana Nyinda

Ngana nyinda  
Where you from  
Who you are  
Ngana nyinda  
Who your mob  
Do they come from far  
Ngana nyinda  
Who that there  
Ngana nyinda  
Hey they different mob  
From everywhere  
Aah different mob  
From everywhere  
Together  
Barndi

CPG

## Balayi Mundungu

Balayi Mundungu  
Balayi Mundungu  
Look out little devils  
Everywhere  
Sitting on your shoulders  
Whispering in your ears  
Pinching you hard  
When someone different  
Strolls by or steps into  
Your little yard

Balayi Mundungu  
Balayi Mundungu  
Poking you in the head  
Did you hear what  
They made you do  
Did you hear what  
You just said  
About the 'Others'  
Different from you  
A tear for you  
I shed and shed

Balayi Mundungu  
Balayi Mundungu  
Do be very careful  
On common ground

For the little devils  
Can bring out your  
Prejudices is always around

CPG

On Julie Dowling's *My White Friend*, Geraldton  
Regional Gallery, 2017

*Who do we work for? Who pays up, smiling, friendly-like?  
Who has washed and ironed the linen dresses? The altar cloth?*

The church is a pyramid and the focus on eternity is a friend's –  
we all have friends! – in our shoes or feet vanishing in grasses,  
introduced grasses, native grasses, in our halo which might

be good spirit, might be shared might be encompassing  
might be a force-field for a truth of two might be an exclusion  
zone might be friends' combined energy might be a barrier?  
Land walked and walked. Story-places of being always being.

A white friend in a white dress. A white friend that shines  
in your glow, reflecting *out* on the viewer studying closely  
in the gallery, shifting from foot to shoe, shoe to foot.

*Who do we work for? Who pays up, smiling, friendly-like?  
Who has washed and ironed the linen dresses? The altar cloth?*

JK

## The Great Western Woodlands

*IM Veronica Brady*

I merit merit and what names  
stood longer and will stand again  
thin rising to blue sky to charred crow  
to red wattlebird and honeyeater  
to drown at the foot of waterbush.

Driving east into the Victorian  
Mallee, and then the emptiness  
of grassed plains that weren't  
grassed plains, where trees  
are windbreaks to be harvested,  
the essence of the Western  
woodlands is clarified.

Its loss would be  
an act of terror:  
those emptying farms  
that would come in its stead  
blank slabs of old-before-their-time  
graves, all creation knocked down.

Quandong is a shrub I was  
overly familiar with as a child.  
In the woodlands I cherish  
it for its fruit, and for itself.  
It speaks – listen, listen.  
It wants its own space,  
gets on well with its neighbours,  
can take human projections.

But to be deleted is not in its vision.  
It hears the pain of loss  
as sandalwood does.

We see a lone emu –  
we see a lone roo –  
we see a lone eagle –  
we see a lone ant  
making its way home.  
They are going somewhere,  
having somewhere to go.  
This is more than human  
intuition. This with the certainty  
of a Dundas mahogany  
rising out of quartz,  
feeling the workings  
of the hole-in-the-ground  
nearby. Nibbling away.

This great lung,  
this great mind,  
this great flesh and blood  
and cellulose entity  
is the powerhouse –  
it is the vastly regional,  
it is the specific and inclusive,  
it is the everything we are.

JK

## Blue Hazmat Suits in the Coolbellup Bush Prior to its Destruction

A premonition or a delayed reaction?  
A parody of deaths from blue asbestos,  
fibres invading Tracy's father's lungs,  
and lungs of so many others we've known.

And as the wound is widened, stretched  
by sadists, blue hazmat suits are seen  
bobbing in and out of the undergrowth,  
a consummate piece of pastoral diplomacy

played out on crown land, a colonial  
power trip for the born-again remittance men,  
their shock troops without masks  
breathing deep the dust from the dozer,

from the mulcher; O lèse-majesté flexes  
as the arrests mount and fibres fall out  
and about, confetti for this wedding  
of development and annihilation,

such comfortable bedfellows. And  
so the evidence mounts, the bushland  
is riddled with dumped asbestos products,  
the tests verify, and then evidence

is suppressed, misplaced, dispersed,  
deleted. O fibres dispersed throughout  
the suburbs into lungs of all ages, all conditions,  
do you expect us to be grateful?

And still the juggernaut, transparency  
of fences revealing the antiworld,  
where ghosts prevaricate, disorientated.  
Children breathe here, you bastards.

And remember that smug capitalist  
eating asbestos on his breakfast cereal?  
Publicity stunt, but some bought it.  
Softly softly among the rowdy machines.

Fibres beneath fingers.  
Fibres in noses, mouths, lungs.  
Fibres on clothes, on uniforms taken home,  
dispersed among loved ones.

JK



## Cathedral Avenue

This doesn't have to be a requiem,  
no, not yet. Each breath these strong  
old trees let us have is a breath that keeps  
us going, keeps the pieces of belonging in place.

What is held in the cathedral  
of salmon gums and wandoo?  
The branches reach to hold  
the sky in place, to keep

earth and sky connected.  
Prayers in all languages  
and all faiths collect in their  
illustrative branches, echo in hollows –

all creatures that come and go,  
that make life in their outreach  
help us hear and see who we are,  
singing past present future.

And the owl knows the cockatoo  
and a galah cocks its comb at the sun;  
the shade translates the writing of time  
which the machinery would cut short.

JK

## Sammies (Salmon Gums)

*for Lindsay, Tim, Tracy and Kim*

*And so the ancient salmon gums are killed off – death-wish  
where roads are widened to ‘prevent deaths’?*

East of where I write but not too far east  
the great sammies arch over the road  
to hold movement in, work to keep a grip  
on the land as they knew it two hundred  
or three hundred years ago, ringing  
the changes of timeline owned and owning,  
knowing patterns of seasons from voices  
rising beneath them always, and so wide  
in the trunk that two of us can only just  
touch hands, a difficulty the plastic ribbons  
of the clearers, sashed around, don't have –  
not ‘welcome back’ from war but declarations  
of war. Strips of dried bark crunching  
reminders underfoot.

If you've never seen a sammie in its home  
place, never been haunted and rejuvenated  
by the way it works dawn or evening light,  
then you probably can't know how much  
its deletion diminishes you, never mind  
country itself. You'll have equivalents,  
of course, but there's no analogy  
to be drawn that won't dilute the agency of light,  
of that orange-pink-white-brown bark negotiating

temporal and spatial variables. Hands reaching  
to touch, a nest high above makes glyphs.  
Sammies, poured into their columns,  
ribbed vaults, horizons of canopy  
through which land and sky parley.

*You know*, near those magnificent sammies ...  
*You know*, those sammies umbrella-ing  
near the corner with Station Road, *you know*,  
*you know*. In the hot wind scouring  
bleached paddocks, embrace  
their cool forms. A heart stretched  
out, an anatomy of transfiguration.  
We acknowledge the elders, who know  
the name of all the creatures who dwell  
in their inner and outer worlds, cross over.  
We acknowledge the poverty we make  
in taking them away, these sammies.  
Where the cropping went, the sammies fell.  
    Their characters inflections of soil.

Riding beneath, rewritten by the spirals of shadow.  
Leaning against the base of a thick trunk to shelter  
from a sun that would hallucinate you to walk  
straight into flames. Slowly, cautiously, drinking  
from the waterbag, you scry a future bare of the present.  
Picnics, gatherings, knowledges of healing and origins,  
all learning cut to the base, grubbed out. Always  
these paradoxes like cigarettes ashed out of car  
windows at the height of summer, flickers  
of holocaust in such a casual gesture. Sammies  
    see us looking out for ourselves.

East of where I write but not too far east  
the great sammies arch over the road  
to hold movement in, and in our mind's eye  
we wander though the ambulatory, cars  
rushing past. We are three generations  
of onlookers enraptured by ancient trees  
that make settlement look as tenuous  
as it is. Knowing this, we listen to the pink  
& greys, the Port Lincoln parrots, the honeyeaters,  
the black-faced wood swallows, the willy wagtails,  
the array of insect species, the Wurak, the Wurak, the Wurak,  
which we borrow from a language that keeps these  
trees in the constellations and *won't* let go of the roots deeper  
than light, as far as we understand it, wanting  
to learn, to respect.

JK

## Still Shame – Why?

Too shame to dance  
Nyambi so pretty  
Too shame to sing  
Mamagarrimanha lifts the spirit  
Too shame to talk  
Wangga so beautiful  
Too shame to write  
Bibarlu wangga powerful  
Too shame to mix  
Yamaji lovely people  
Too shame still why  
This world needs to  
See all beautiful Yamaji  
And Yamaji need to  
See the world

CPG

## Strong Wajarri Man

His skin is fair – no argument there  
Lived as a Yamaji all his life  
As a strong Wajarri man  
That is his world that is his clan  
Though he was raised in town  
This family know their connections  
To kin, place, country all around

His skin is fair – no argument there  
His old people's sweat and tears  
Dropped into Wajarri land  
His old people's feet  
Stirred Wajarri sand and dust  
Their bones now rest  
On Murchison stations out there  
And some now say no to this Wajarri man  
For Wajarri land he can't care  
Cause he not related to them  
That type of reason is up in the air

His skin is fair – no argument  
He is heading to 70 a winja now  
He knows his barna and clan  
For he is a strong Wajarri man

CPG

## Identity Police

A word of warning  
Mr Mrs Identity Police  
Watch the words  
You might regret  
Be very careful  
What you say  
To the fair skinned Yamaji  
Don't cruel them or  
Dismiss them like that  
One day this could be how your  
Grand kids, great grandkids  
Are treated because of a colour thing  
Taunted, dismissed, dissected, cruelled  
Think about that next time  
Learn to ssshhh ... shut your mouth  
Don't let them words you might regret  
Escape into the wind  
Push them back ... hold them  
Yeah be very careful what you say  
Anyways who are you to say  
Who is real and who is not  
Who can be and who cannot  
Learn to ssshhh ... shut your mouth  
It's not your right to be the identity police  
There are words you might regret

CPG

## Drug Slaves

The most hated people  
In our communities  
Should be the drug dealers  
And drug couriers  
The ones who risk  
The highways carting drugs  
The ones who give the first shot  
The ones who give the first taste  
To our beautiful healthy strong young ones  
To our future leaders we carry forward  
The ones soak up a hellish status  
Display of cars and motorbikes  
Rings and gold chains around their necks  
Not too flashy but flashy enough  
The ones who are not strangers  
To a community but rather  
Our brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, aunties  
Grandmothers, grandfathers, friends, children  
Thinking only of the dollar they can get  
Or drug access for their own habits  
When will they get shown  
The other side of their sales  
The broken minds  
The broken bodies  
The broken souls  
The broken homes  
The broken communities  
They should be the most hated

CPG



## Needle Teacher

Oh I have heard the whispers  
About what a great teacher she is  
That she is gentle  
Knows how to handle a needle  
Smooth as it finds a vein  
Does it herself no problem  
A drug dealer's prize  
She will take away your fears  
Of injecting yourself  
She will teach you  
Once you get the taste  
So that you can introduce  
Others to a hellish space  
Oh I have heard the whispers  
Better than a nurse they say  
(No one is better than a nurse who saves lives)  
The needle teacher fucking everyone up  
The wicked witch of the speed world

CPG

## Dark Light Bulbs

Pardon my ignorance  
I always thought light bulbs  
Were to lighten up a space  
Make things brighter  
Help us to see better  
Now I find they have  
A sinister dark side

They are a tool to hell  
Don't try and tell me otherwise  
A speed freak's, rev head's  
Smoking instrument  
To extinguish the goodness  
From head and body  
Whose dark idea was this?  
To allow pain and misery  
From something that creates brightness

Light bulbs have many purposes  
But this one I have seen  
Is evil and fucked  
I know this cos of family  
I seen my young relatives  
Going crazy losing it  
Young men and young women  
Unnaturally thin  
Mood swings like you would  
Never believe  
Teeth rotting, track marks

Pardon my ignorance  
I always thought light bulbs  
Make things brighter  
Whose dark idea was that?

CPG

## Death Stress

The gut wrenching feeling of death  
Tugs you to the very core  
There is too much in the community  
The flow is way too fast  
If you don't scream aloud  
You scream deep within  
Where only you can feel  
Your body shaking  
Your spirit like a restless  
Thing trapped in a cage  
Tormented feeling death  
So close and so often

Their reasons for departing  
Heart attack, diabetes, stroke  
Does not matter in the end  
What matter is that  
They will no longer tread  
Upon the soft earth with you  
That they will no longer  
Hug you when you need it  
Is what matters  
That they will no longer  
Tease and joke with you  
Is what matters  
Their reasons for departing  
Do not matter in the end

Forced tears is what we have  
We have cried too much  
Forced tears is what is here  
With our family dying way too fast  
Most times way too young  
Sometimes not making sense  
We suffer death stress  
Not enough time to grieve  
For each of those who leave  
Not enough time to heal  
Forced tears to show it's real  
Forced tears is sometimes  
All that is left as we struggle  
We suffer death stress  
We grieve for ourselves as well

CPG

## Funeral Directors

Many know the process well  
How to organise a funeral  
Is not a stranger after a while  
The real funeral directors are kind  
Patient, sympathetic, respectful  
It's their job isn't it?  
And it can be a costly one at that  
Some wanting more than they can afford  
Coffins can be expensive  
Yagu wanted a simple dignified funeral  
And a coffin in the colours  
It was found in Noongar country  
Making anxious funeral directors  
They hadn't done this before in Geraldton  
Yagu wanted to decolonise funeral ceremony  
And this was her way of doing it  
Many of us know the process well  
It is a stressful but respectful one  
Becoming unofficial funeral planners  
Every family has a funeral planner  
We have become friends with burials  
To help our loved ones, our friends, our community

CPG

## Monitoring Lizards

Five hundred will do it mate  
To walk this land  
Monitoring lizard over  
Rocks, hills and sand  
Clearing the way for  
Train tracks, pipelines, roads  
Mine sites, power lines, land release  
Clearing land – no sites here mate  
Five hundred dollars will do it mate  
Heritage site clearances  
A trap for the poor  
Lollies for the lizards  
You know them ones who  
Sell their country for the dollar  
Five hundred bucks in the pocket  
Will bring some food, grog and gunja  
Or casino, casino, casino, casino  
Jobs for the boys, jobs for the men  
Monitoring for the robbers  
And their false plans

CPG

## A New Ode to Westralia: Anthem for All Future Sporting Events

The state is killing our souls

The state has murdered the people – some they murder over and over

The state has deployed vicious antibodies to kill the good cells and let the infection thrive

The state has equated work with destruction and manipulated the outcome –

remember, the state has no love for unions.

The state deployed its shock troops who watched on as poems were yelled

at them, their commander marshalling attitude, saying: how can we

shut this one up? Poets of the world, take notice. They will close

you down the moment you break free of your anthologies, your safety in pages of literary journals, the comforts of award nights.

The state shapes itself out of dust rising from underforest's soul exposed to the exhaust of earth-moving equipages

The state chips and mulches because it has heard rumours of Plato's theory of forms and thinks it needs a new translation full of local

business inflection, full of their own brand of civilisation.

The state has no intention of letting traditional owners maintain traditional

places of worship of culture or belonging – it's always been about

the twin poles of denial and deletion.



The state has reservoirs of species names and the odd pressed  
sample  
of a flower they wish to remain as a Latin name and a  
collectible,  
gathering in worth, which is the essence of market  
economics,  
rolling on through the bushland with gung-ho in-your-face  
finality.

The state wants you to gasp as the tall tree cracks and is brought  
down fast,  
the pair of tawny frogmouths lifting to nowhere, dazzled by  
daylight.

JK

## Always thieves

Thieves arrived in all disguises  
Colonial officers, convicts, settlers, free men  
No treaties and trinkets here  
Guns and guns was their dirty talk  
Thieves wrapped warmly with the  
Blankets of terra nullius

Arrived as colonial thieves  
    Remain as colonial thieves

Stealing, tricking, lying, murdering  
Claiming all lands for the king  
A crown dripping with Aboriginal blood  
A bloodied history worthy of thieves  
Passed on generation after generation

Arrived as colonial thieves  
    Remain as colonial thieves

Handing out land grants to settlers  
Auctioning land to all except the invisible victims  
Was this not an empty land free for the taking?  
Massacres were strategic for any interference  
This my friend is how White Australia did it  
This my friend is Australia's history

Arrived as colonial thieves  
    Remain as colonial thieves

Thieves remain in all disguises  
Mining companies, politicians, governments  
With their greedy white, yellow, white hands  
Dirty hands coated with traces of blood  
From the past from the present from the land  
Selling to the highest bidder

Arrived as colonial thieves  
Remain as colonial thieves

CPG

## In Marapikurrinya: for Ms Dhu

The uniforms won't listen, ore heaped up,  
long steel ships waiting to take country  
away. They refuse to see themselves,  
boots and all, march away

from all spirits. They laugh at body,  
they laugh at words, but they  
have no idea they are dead-in-themselves,  
their faces dressed up for the cameras.

They kill with impunity. They are designed  
that way. In another lock-up, I have  
seen the body of a young Noongar bloke  
tossed like a hessian sack, his bones

all busted, and the ring-a-ring-a-rosie  
circle laughing and saying you deserve  
what you get. The uniforms denied he was  
*in there*, inside his own body. The sounds

that crept out were television – they all watched  
American cop shows. It's all there for them –  
the land dressed up as state or nation:  
they fancy their long arms reaching out,

they fancy their long arms reaching  
across tribal boundaries, heaping it all  
into the belly of those long ships  
or into trucks or train. To furnaces.

Stretching fences across stone and sand  
and far into sea? Their magnificent  
jurisdiction. They are their own  
totems. They worship their order.

I know that port. I have been in a house  
where Nyangumarta and Yamaji  
came together listening to Coloured Stone  
and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee.

And stories were told then, back  
then, as the death-toll rises and those  
hunting parties of the Old North  
find their latest manifestation.

This reaches out to you, Ms Dhu,  
and to all those from past and present  
who hold you close, who won't  
see you lost in the files.

You will outlive them all.  
You will hold back the uniforms  
from striking more and more of your people down.  
You will be the beginning. You will never end.

JK

## Growing

For I have been a caterpillar  
Far too long cocooned  
I lay still in the same space  
Waited patiently for the wings  
That I knew would grow  
And become a part of me  
I never wanted to be a caterpillar  
But it is part of the journey  
Some caterpillars never  
Get their wings and it  
Is them I fear the most  
For they will surely kill us

CPG

## Shopping Centre Carpark

So I'm pulled up under the shade of a sugar gum in the Woollies carpark in Northam, and this guy pulls up in a car next to me, getting what shade he can. Our windows are down and I call across and say, Giddy mate, just wondering if I can ask your opinion about something. Sure mate, he calls back, his arms still resting on the steering wheel. Well, I say, This guy was just asking me – came up out of nowhere to ask – how much pressure a ride-on lawn-mower tyre can take. Look, he's over there now at the servo and is about to inflate the tyre and I said I reckon 8 pounds and I don't want to have given him the wrong info. Yeah, mate, he said, That'd be about right. And then we joke about the consequences of over-inflation but at no one's expense. And then we get talking about double-gees puncturing bike tyres and tricks to beat the spikes, and how bad they are this year with the summer rains and he tells me he was up in Kal doing his work and his dog couldn't leave the verandah because of them. When I was wandering the paddocks as a kid, I say, It was hell – feet like pincushions. And he says, I'm always tellin' my kids that if you don't check your shoes we'll have them further than everywhere. It's a good conversation. Then his family appear and I return to listening to the radio before looking up on hearing laughter and seeing a shopping trolley escaping across the carpark.

My new friend, his family secure in the car,  
drives towards the trolley – the carpark is basically  
empty, it being a Sunday arvo, just someone approaching  
on foot but a dozen car-lengths away – and deftly  
grabs the trolley's handle out of his window  
and guides it with the car to a line of other trolleys,  
slotting it perfectly in place like a nest of tables, a set  
of Russian dolls, a magic box. He then drives off  
and I think, Well done mate. I wish you a double-gee-  
free day. But then a stranger is at my window,  
and straight in my ear, There goes trouble,  
she spits. Sorry? I say. You know, *that lot* ...  
I click. I reckon he did an excellent job, I say  
back, staring past her into a distance she  
won't register. She persists, *They're* trouble.  
You've got that wrong, I say, A good bloke  
who did a good job. She walks away, saying,  
Well I s'pose it's better than leaving the trolley  
in the middle of the carpark. And I think over  
this town with its abundance of Pauline Hanson's  
One Nation signs, and I think over this town and its  
foul history, and I think over this town and the friend  
I have made, and I say to myself, Brother, if you ever  
read this, know I admire you, know I appreciate  
your talking over that issue. You know  
about the politics of double-gees,  
and I am listening to all that you tell me.

JK

\*



## Shopping Centre Carpark (Response)

*For Debbie and Glenda*

Geraldton Woollies carpark fringe  
Big mob hang out there often  
A bottle shop across the road and taxi rank  
Good central spot to catch up if you want  
Pauline Hanson came to town and went  
Across to the carpark fringe shaking hands  
Photo opportunity with Yamaji people  
For the WA state election train wreck  
They didn't know the community  
Any group of Aboriginals will do attitude  
Three Yamaji women parked up in carpark  
And went to do an unwelcome to country  
Yes you heard right – an unwelcome to country  
For Pauline Hanson One Nation Party  
Centre bosses pushed them out  
But they refused to retreat to Woollies carpark  
With their *get off Yamajiland Pauline H* banner  
That party is one big Australian double-gee  
As a kid I would call them jubaal-gees  
I was a bit shocked to learn proper name  
Out bush you gotta have thick skin  
Drag your barefoot to minimise hurt  
Did that as a kid but now my feet are soft  
A bit too soft from wearing shoes nowadays

CPG

## The Wild Colonial Boy

The wild colonial boy is a loner

The wild colonial boy has guilt over his plunder

The wild colonial boy plunders his guilt

The wild colonial boy doesn't know

what to do with the plunder

The wild colonial boy offloads the plunder

at the trash and treasure

The wild colonial boy can't tune into the Eureka Stockade

The wild colonial boy tries to fly in and fly out but is caught out,

amphetamines in his urine

The wild colonial boy shares a cell with a Noongar bloke

who shares law and knowledge from country

The wild colonial boy would rather be inside than out

because the chains and slavery of the languages

of occupation leave him confused and angry,

but inside is murder and he knows it

The wild colonial boy doesn't know what to do

with his skill set – he thinks of going bush

The wild colonial boy watches the numbats

near the huts in the visitors' part of Dryandra Forest

The wild colonial boy listens to the crested pigeon flying, to the

bush stone-

curlew stalking, the western gerygone singing along with the

elegant parrot in the canopy and the golden whistler

and even the nest-hunting shining bronze-cuckoo

The wild colonial boy couldn't be said to be distracted as the cops

close in around him, but listening to the cross-talk

of community, the close-knit interferences of belonging,

the distress of songs broken up by songs of repair and

reparation

The wild colonial boy is taken and cuffed and has the shit  
kicked out of him – now he is tattooed with a constellation  
that shines over no part of the earth but is permanent

The wild colonial boy watches a young Noongar bloke being beaten  
to death in the lockup

The wild colonial boy has been extradited as witness  
to be laughed at by the judge, to be warned to say nothing  
more  
if he ever wants to wander the plains again

The wild colonial boy promises himself he will shout the truth  
at every footy match, in front of every television,  
to the writers of reports who will go home to love and calm

The wild colonial boy wanders the port streets on his release,  
not understanding he's in a decolonising world,  
the shops bristling with worldly goods, with opportunities,  
and all good things coming to those standing and waiting

The wild colonial boy stops in front of a travel agency window  
and sees a jet will take him anywhere in the world  
and that he can unlearn the codes of his failings –  
he can become he can become he can become

The wild colonial boy has worn dresses and wandered naked  
and has never been stuck on the codes of the pub  
and wonders if his time has come, but the urbane laugh  
at him – his phonelessness – head-in-hands on the kerb

The wild colonial boy looks out for his mate the actor  
but knows in his heart that his friend is gone,  
a friend who had been eaten by *Australia*,  
a friend whose name he won't use in a song  
out of respect for the dead

The wild colonial boy looks out from near the walls  
of the Roundhouse and finds solace  
in the sea, the dolphins, the gulls

The wild colonial boy hears the many conversations  
and all languages make sense to him  
though he claims none – he is homeless  
and stateless and his family can't reach him

The wild colonial boy can't call Australia home, though he has never  
really left its shores; but he has travelled outside its jurisdictions,  
and he has travelled far beyond its metaphors

JK

## A White Colonial Boy

The wild white colonial boy  
Arrived with the settlers  
Sits at the table of invasion  
Drinking regrets and dreams  
In a colony of wild visions  
This was and is his lot

The wild white colonial boy's  
Multiple personalities  
Drive him like a madman  
Across the generations  
I met him personally  
A few times over the years  
Whispering in my ears  
'Why do your people stink?'  
Touching the colours on my wrist  
Publicly telling me  
'My grandfathers raped your grandmothers'  
He got a black eye that night from my shoe  
A gift from my many grandmothers

The wild white colonial boy  
Like a bigshot cowboy in a one-horse town  
With steel caps stamping mob to the ground  
Digging deep into their back with brutal force  
In a cell where inmates become invisible  
Becoming a surname, cell name, number  
And a caged animal to be played with  
By their deranged colonial delights

The wild white colonial boy  
Gets wrapped in a sense of  
Social media security with the likes  
Comments validating his crimes  
Committed or about to be  
'Thumb ups mate – go ahead it's fine'  
Murdering and harming First Nations  
In the most horrific and horrendous ways  
A murder will become a traffic offence  
An unpaid fine will become a murder  
And like an audience at a caged arena fight  
The social media clowns applaud  
A biased court system  
Already in favour of the wild colonial boy

The wild white colonial boy perches  
Like false king on his high court judge bench  
Inflicting further colonial trauma on  
Behalf of the Australian government  
If First Nations cannot prove continued  
Connection to country since invasion  
They remain invisible and the justifications  
For stealing First Nations' land is safe  
The rallies for human justice are  
Likened to a community noise for  
Which these false kings will not bow down  
The concept of terra nullius remains  
Intact in the midst and mind of this civilised  
Wild white colonial boys' club  
And will continue to guide the rules  
Of a society and a nation  
The wild white colonial boys

Become the very rich of this country  
Living the life of colony chaps  
Reading outdated books at colonial posts  
The colony past has not left anything good  
On First Nation relationships  
These boys interfere in the welfare  
Of First Nations' community and society  
Whilst continuing to steal land resources  
Wanting to impose bandaid social  
Engineering solutions creating further hindrance

As a Mullewa school kid I once sang  
A song about a wild colonial boy  
Who had robbed the wealthy and helped the poor  
An Irish boy shot dead at 21 years young  
That's the real wild colonial boy

CPG

## Peacocking at Ellendale Pool

Speaking a truth doesn't disabuse  
as the martins and swallows fly in & out

of the cliffs, and the pool that is bottomless  
reaches beyond all prospects of drought,

and the kestrel positions itself for the edges  
of chaos, and campers wade into amoebic

meningitis – into the cells – on a thirty-eight  
degree day. Randolph Stow is celebrated

on a sign in the eye of the land, and we are informed  
that he wrote *A Haunted Land* and *desire*

troubled this enclave, eye of the fillet,  
its bloodied history. And then he was gone,

ensconced in Suffolk, away from his troubled  
identity, or the lapses in identity that left

him stranded. And among those revenant  
thick white river redgums (felled so readily), caravans

& willie wagtails, and a long-nosed dragon  
in a swamp sheoak flashing point to point,

and the public gorging itself on the scene,  
that interlude in a thermonuclear world,



pastoral country up to its edges, and another sign  
speaking of the 'Indigenous connection' – thriller

subtext, crime drama, blockbuster and award winner,  
as if it's a connection we might take under advice!

This land that never stopped being Aboriginal land,  
and *it* allows us to walk its erosions without being

plunged to the bottom of the bottomless pit.  
Such decorations of the literary! Such gifts of English!

JK

## Creation Markings – Ellendale Pool

Mesmerising natural waterhole  
Attention commanding rock face  
Ancient resident reflects self on water  
Open eyes see land talking back

*Skimming water surface dragonflies  
David Uniapon makes me think*

Amangu cultural site drowned  
Stubbie to quench thirst on ledge  
Water playground farming work ground  
Tourist furniture barbie toilet swings

*Bimara resting place of creator  
Significant culture marker demoted tourism*

Bottomless pit conversations  
Known to swallow men down darkness  
Greenough Tourist Drive cultural marker  
With offers of a hidden oasis for intruders

*Pick up sand and throw in belonging marking  
Protection marking cultural beliefs intact*

Tapestry of coexistence woven  
Colonised story forefront story  
Mythical track moving across land dissected  
Metal sculpture appeases society guilt

CPG

## Epilogue

As the Beeliar bushland is mowed down  
and some of us who aren't traditional owners  
are also torn from the inside out, we look to those  
whose Boodja it is to take it back, to give it health.  
There can be no surrender of spiritual rights  
in an agreement made by a government  
using bargaining chips they stole  
in the first place. Noongar land  
yarning with all living things of the world  
joined together: land, water, air, spirit.

\*

Refuse to hit your head for sadness  
Refuse to draw head blood for grief  
Refuse to consider death of our land  
This barna – our ancestors' land – our land  
Exists as long as we exist to protect it  
Farmers poison with fertilisers  
Salt pans across the wheat belt country  
Like seeping green, pink and white wounds  
Miners blow up and steal country from country  
Property developers bulldoze for urban sprawl  
Most Bluff Point shell middens long gone  
Consumerism demands highways  
Engineers are agents of change – wetlands die  
Shall I hit my head to draw blood  
To drip into the barna and mix  
Letting country know we care

That a sadness exists for settlers don't care  
Our ancestors earth memories  
Mingled within the grains of country  
Are being removed and destroyed  
Our old people's spirits are embedded  
In a way colonisers can't understand  
So I shall hum a lullaby and share a story  
To soothe the hurt and pain down generations  
A gentle whisper from the past  
Visits me in my dreams  
Or is it the future that I see  
Why are we still invisible?

JK & CPG

## CPG: Glossary

Amangu traditional name of cultural group in City of Greater  
Geraldton area

Balayi is the Wajarri word for a warning, lookout, beware

Balu is the Wajarri word for him, her or it

Barna is the Wajarri word for ground, earth, sand, country

Barndi is the Wajarri word for good, okay, well, clever

Bibarlu is the Wajarri word for paper

Mamagarrimanha in Wajarri means dancing, corroboree

Mara is the Wajarri word for hand

Mooniemia is the traditional placename of Northampton, Western  
Australia

Multhu is the Wajarri word for vagina, cunt

Mundungu is the Wajarri word for devil, creature, ghost

Naaguja traditional name of cultural group in City of Greater  
Geraldton, Chapman Valley area

Nganayungu in Wajarri means 'my, mine, for, me'

Ngatha is the Wajarri word for I

Nhanda traditional name of cultural group Northampton area

Nhanagardi traditional name of cultural group in City of Greater  
Geraldton area and in Wajarri means 'over there'

Nyambi is the Wajarri word for dance, traditional type dance  
shaking knee

Nyarlu is the Wajarri word for woman, female, and girl

Nyinda is the Wajarri word for you (singular), 2nd person

Tangi is the Maori word which refers to a ceremonial Maori funeral  
or wake

Wadjemup is the traditional placename for Rottnest Island Western  
Australia

Wangga is the Wajarri word for talk

Winja is the Wajarri word for old, senior  
Yagu is the Wajarri word for mother, mother's sister  
Yamaji is Wajarri word to describe person of the Midwest/  
Murchison region of Western Australia, or Wajarri name for  
'man', 'Aboriginal'

## JK: Notes

Joseph Bradshaw was a pastoralist who came across numerous rock paintings in the Kimberley in 1891. It is offensive they bear his name. These Gwion Gwion rock art works of the Kimberley are focussed around the Roe River and are said to be up to 25,000 years old. Unique and complex, they evade 'European' analysis in so many ways. For more information readers might see (among other sites): <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/arts/bradshaw-gwion-gwion-rock-art>

*Serment du Jeu de paume* – 'The Tennis Court Oath', 20th June 1789, France (in the context of the French Revolution)

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis\\_Court\\_Oath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis_Court_Oath)

Wuruk (or Wurak) is the Noongar word for Salmon gum  
(*Eucalyptus salmonophloia*)

Boodja is the Noongar word for country

See: <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/language/>

Bungarra is a sand monitor, sometimes called a 'racehorse goanna'  
'Mons. Hawes had a great affinity with the Aboriginal people of Mullewa but they were not comfortable in attending Mass in the local church.' [http://www.monsignorhawes.com.au/thebuildings\\_mullewaoutlady.html](http://www.monsignorhawes.com.au/thebuildings_mullewaoutlady.html)

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CPG

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The poem 'Old Girl' was as written in response to the following by artist Julie Dowling: *Old Girl* 2003, courtesy of the City of Joondalup Collection, as part of Joondalup NAIDOC 2015.

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*'Papertalk Green and Kinsella take no prisoners. Tuck your sensitivities away or read something with less salt and gristle. Those wanting to know the heart of Australia's darkness enter here.'* **BRUCE PASCOE**

*'In their call and response to one another, these two fine poets, who sing different pathways through a common ground of land and history, make something larger happen. Their voices are powered by the urgency of taking action against lies, violence and continuing destruction. As they exchange their experiences, they reveal vulnerability. Papertalk Green's rejoicing in Tamají culture becomes a healing counterpoint to John Kinsella's grief for the 'overload of salt' that is everywhere now. If ever there was poetry in which country speaks itself, for all of us to hear, this beautiful, eloquent antiphon is it.'*

*Nicholas Jose*



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