

## Bark Telephone

By David J Delaney

I'm settled as the campfire glow reflects on to the wide Barcoo  
while, leaning back on this old gum, bright moonlight sheds a breathless view.  
My mind drifts slowly into space, I'm mesmerised by solitude,  
imagination now takes hold and with my fantasies, collude.

Each clump of bark upon this tree is like a phone line to the past,  
just place a piece against your ear. Oh! Wouldn't that be such a blast?  
What could this ancient gum reveal, where many tribes once freely walked,  
I'd hear about the dreamtime age and learn from elders while they talked.

Then every scene I would relive just with the closing of my eyes,  
and view our dreamtime animals beneath Australia's clear skies.  
I'd hear about the Ooyan man how, as a curlew why he cries,  
or young Wayamba, changing to a turtle still with roving eyes.

Then, lands our young mate Captain Cook who claims our land as England's own,  
he raised old 'Jack' on virgin shore, a site where Sydney has now grown.  
Our past was built on convict stock, for minor crimes they all were sent  
to penal sites along our coast where life was cruel and years were spent.

I hold another piece of bark and hear new stories that were told,  
about Eureka's failed stockade or those caught in the search for gold.  
Then learned about young Robert Burke who joined by Wills went to explore,  
and perished on that trip to be the first to reach the northern shore.

I dream that there are rows of trees that store our history so clear,  
and all one really has to do is hold some bark against one's ear.  
We have our heroes from the past, there's been so many through the years  
who forged their way on dusty tracks, and left behind their loved ones tears.

These grand trees from our vast outback or giants on our sprawling coast  
have lived our growing history, I'm sure they'd keep us all engrossed.  
I'm startled by a barking owl just as the campfire starts to fade,  
now tucked inside my battered swag, I lie where once some tribes had stayed.

# Writing Raw

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So as my eyes begin to close and, sheltered by this old gum tree,  
I thank my lucky stars for my own time of wandering so free.  
And wonder how my life would be, without the need of coin or quid  
to travel through our changing land, and walk like pioneers once did.

## Finding the Poet Within

By David J Delaney

So you think you're a poet spending all your time  
just tinkering with free verse or some classic rhyme,  
or maybe you like haiku, tanka, abc,  
some sonnets, or Australian bush poetry.

Perhaps it's in a couplet, stories you can tell  
or could you like the challenge of a villanelle.  
An epic might excite, but not an epigram,  
might write a limerick while riding in a tram.

Iambic pentameter might just turn you on,  
or can one narrative be like a marathon.  
Then when you write a lyric, does it tug your heart,  
and when you pen a lay, are they a piece of art?

Some idyll poetry depicts a country dream  
though, does romanticism want to make you scream.  
With over fifty five great forms of poetry,  
to name each one, is quite a challenge now for me.

Because there's such a choice, why study only one,  
and learn the disciplines of how they all are done.  
Appreciate the work in every single style,  
attempt to write them all, becoming versatile.

And don't stray from this path, one day you'll make a choice  
then, find your worldly niche - your own poetic voice.  
Some scholars try to push one form of poetry,  
they won't open their minds and let their thoughts be free.

So make sure you can read all of the books you can,  
on poets and their styles or where it all began.  
And keep on learning and accept the discipline,  
for one day you will find, the poet deep within.

## On the Wallaby With You

By David J Delaney

You know! It's always great, to sit down with your mate  
and talk of all the places that you've been.  
Around the campfire light, beneath the stars so bright,  
we reminisce on all the sights we've seen,  
and, as we're sitting back, the billy, old and black,  
now boils and spits onto the campfire flame.  
Then, looking back at you, I feel your love that's true,  
I'm pleased that you agreed to take my name.

So as I fill your cup, (beside your bluey pup)  
again I'm drifting back to when we met,  
was Brisbane at Rocklea, when you first noticed me,  
I knew you were the one I had to get.  
Now after all these years, including sometimes tears,  
our love has just grown stronger everyday,  
and while we're on the road, we share each others load,  
until we find another place to stay.

We talk of Wineglass bay, that Tassie summer day,  
how we walked hand in hand along the shore.  
Port Arthur's famous jail, (where prisoners would wail)  
were buried on that island by the score,  
or when we stayed at Sale where hay I tried to bale  
before we headed out to see Karween.  
Then rode the scenic rail down in old Flowerdale,  
We've never seen the land so lush and green.

And how we felt the chill, at 'Eagle on the hill'  
when building snowmen in the local park.  
We read about a bloke (who struck the Sydney smoke)  
at Stuart town once known as Ironbark.  
At the Cervantes fair, we smelt the fresh sea air  
and heard the poets spruik their very best.  
With Tamworth's country din, we merrily joined in,  
we wore Akubras and a leather vest.

# Writing Raw

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Then up in Kakadu I hung on tight to you,  
when that large croc leapt at the boat for food,  
and down near Uluru, that's when you spotted 'Blue',  
your charming way I just could not allude.  
The river Todd's a place, we went to watch a race,  
and laughed at all those boats with hairy legs.  
Then how could we forget, the Queensland far north wet,  
those northerners who drink their beer from kegs.

If we did settle down, in some small country town,  
we'd write a book as thick as 'War and Peace'.  
Of summers and the rain, of happiness and pain,  
and oceans, birds, and jumbucks and their fleece,  
though here we sit again, years travelled tally ten,  
I know we'll keep on moving for some time.  
For you my darling love, I thank the Man above,  
and sometimes write about you in my rhyme.

For now, I'll write a song by this old billabong,  
of how we like to hold each other tight.  
And while you stroke blue's ear, I turn and say, 'My dear,  
you're perfect like the Kimberleys tonight'.  
I knew it from the start, back when you stole my heart  
there's nothing in the world I'd rather do  
than have you by my side, my love I just can't hide,  
when touring 'on the wallaby' with you.

## Sonnet no. 8 A Tribute for Keats

By David J Delaney

His classic style enralls us to this day;  
interpretations of a troubled past.  
His love of life in verse was on display,  
it was a shame his young life did not last.  
Superbly written verses still remain,  
including those for his love Fanny Braune.  
And how he left the chilly English rain  
for Rome, with health he'd hoped to greet each dawn.  
Late February, eighteen twenty-one,  
tuberculosis took his final breath  
at Twenty-Five, his father's eldest son.  
In time the world would learn of his cruel death.  
Then, through the scholars and those on the streets,  
You'll never be forgotten, Mr. Keats.

## Valley of Sin 1970

By David J Delaney

cigarette lighter glow  
dirty spoon  
glint from the pick  
nursing my friend  
as the demon drug takes hold.

suddenly  
into this valley lane way  
a stranger walks.

semi-conscious  
my friend panics  
HELP! HELP ME RUN!!!  
arm in arm  
we stagger and stumble,  
trying to run.

the stranger's attention turns to others

beneath an overpass we rest  
silhouetted by street light

"cop?" I ask  
"no! trainee white collar  
after young flesh  
in the name of god  
– bastards!"  
he drifts into sleep

I leave in morning darkness,  
never again will I see my friend.

## Winter Westerlies

By David J Delaney

Winter westerlies blow  
down from the Blue Mountains  
groping through every nook and cranny  
with their bitter cold fingers

even wearing heavy coats  
these carriers of misery  
still find a way  
to pierce ones flesh

inside the row of workers cottages  
built with  
flimsy fibro  
rattley windows  
draughty floorboards  
three brothers sit  
huddled under blankets  
on an old vinyl lounge  
in the corner an HMV tv  
stands on "stick" legs  
belting out  
a youthful Cliff Richard  
to eyes that are not watching  
the brothers are mesmerised  
by the lino floor covering  
that rises about twelve inches  
with every icy gust  
then deflates at this Westerly's ebb

such was a day  
in the life of...  
my childhood



# Writing Raw

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**David J Delaney bio:** Now in my late 50's I left school at 15 years old only 3 months after "making" grade 8 has been in many ways a drawback involving my literary goals as I only starting "writing" in late December 2007 and has been a huge learning curb for me, I am still tackling how verbs, adjectives, nouns, syllables, etc, work. As a poet, and recently a memoire/short story writer, I have had wonderful support, in Cairns, Queensland, Australia and worldwide. My love for writing and the impact it has on everyday people, has, definitely been an inspiration to continue with something I honestly enjoy, and, if I inspire one person to write and or showcase their work, then I have done my job.