

Classic Poetry Series

**Lionel Fogarty**  
**- poems -**

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## Lionel Fogarty(1958 -)

Lionel Fogarty is an Indigenous Australian poet and political activist.

He was born in 1958 at Barambah (now called Cherbourg Aboriginal Reserve) in Queensland where he grew up. He has been involved in Aboriginal activism from his teenage years, mainly in Southern Queensland on issues such as Land Rights, Aboriginal health and deaths in custody. His brother, Daniel Yock died at the hands of police in 1993. His poetry, while in no way dismissable as simply 'political poetry', can be seen as an extension of these activities on another front. Common themes are the maintenance of traditional aboriginal culture and the everyday realities of European occupation. Among the most 'experimental' of contemporary Australian poetry, his work has sometimes been described as 'surrealist'. Certainly large amounts of Indigenous Language, which white Australians sometimes find confronting, are employed but in part as an attempt to further dialogue between Australian cultures.

# A Lie

Way out in the valleys and  
mountain ranges of light

You came quiet in roaring tide  
in the sunset lagoon  
How softly whispers the river  
and streams in endless waters  
THOSE  
can't tell a lie.

Lionel Fogarty

# A Vera Takes A Ride

We use to ride emus and dolphins  
We now have feathers over our bodys  
You in black and me in red  
Inside a yellow man's dream.  
Start us up we'll never stop  
Gonna pump up your sense  
Gonna rub in the juice.  
Is it any black wonder  
Is it any white wonder  
Trouble and strife making love  
They fuss crazies and screaming  
Neighbours unto strangers.  
We used to ride emus and dolphins  
You've wrecked our living  
Washing up, drinking, dancing  
In engaging struggle, at didgeridoo, groaning and straining.  
You made a grown race cry  
You made a grown hate tearer  
Some are lazy slobs  
Some are marrying speed  
Now mean mean machine  
Open your heart starter.  
We shine out in the sun  
We living scared in being shined  
You gotta feel to love  
Shock dem, sink dem.  
We are brothers in our own  
Adolescence maybe cold running  
You know chain and reality  
Now quotes of conversations  
Come once on a noise breeze  
Like echoes in the name of  
Guerrillas in another range.  
We ride the emu fast  
We speak to dolphins for us to ride  
When we win the ministry  
Don't come wondering about.  
We used to sing martyrs to the harvest  
Of the leaving fruit

Just circulate passion surrendered  
In our consolation of action  
Ride dat dolphins and emus faster.

Lionel Fogarty

# Black Woman

She's native, naked, she's native and naked  
She takes me down and wipes my body  
She holds me in her arms and warms my heart  
She pushes into my mouth with the smell from future voices  
She multitudes my soul into many magnificent beliefs  
She never is betrayal to love  
Ain't no mountain fireplace gonna encounter her burnt scar  
Ain't tiptoe intense kiss gonna undress her lips  
She has powers in dignity and her nights endure my feelings  
    with the moon or stars  
She turned my life's passions too beautifully for sleeping  
    whispering  
Glory travels worthy in her lyric spirit  
I am fragile in mine but she comes in galaxy memorised  
Some outrageous reality remains in this society, but she comes  
    down plundering moves by radio hateness  
She has been disappearing  
She has been reappearing  
She is the spice of earth and is the psalm's tangled up in flesh matters  
    my embracements are mine  
Branches are of a new thing now called gulls of agony  
But she takes this over bridges  
But she has private hurts and loves  
Now my body speaking for everything she gave is spoken  
But my robbed yearning became strangehood  
But I praise her touch happenings in her stages.  
She is my friend I sort of love her  
But sick as me I believe in her returns.

Lionel Fogarty

# Burn The Bridges

YOU ARE VULNERABLE AS GLASS ARE FALL TO PEACES  
WHEN TOILED OF THE STRIPPING OF OUR PRIDES

YOU ARE RESTLESS IN LIFE  
WHEN WE'VE BORN ANOTHER TO FIGHT

ALL THE BRIDGES OF YOUR MUSIC WILL BURN AS SOON  
AS YOU WALK TO THE CENTRE OF OUR PROBLEMS

YOU MIGHT HAVE MOVED TO OUR SACRED RIGHTS  
BUT YOUR PRICE IS HIGH IN

INTEREST RATES AND THEN YOU PROWL AROUND  
UNRESPECTFUL TO ALL BLACK FAMILYS HOMES

YOU ARE THEY DAT WATCH PROTECT AND  
LAUGH AS THE BLACKFELLAS RISE

THE WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE IS LIKE WAITING FOR A PAST  
OF PEOPLE TO COME AND PROCLAIM THE LAND

BUT SITTING HERE BLOCKING OUT THE UNJUSTIFIABLE SINS  
SINS ARE WHAT YOU ARE DOING

Lionel Fogarty

# Connection Requital

SOMETHING THERE FROM DOWN THERE JOY SAD BLUES  
IS TALKING TO US FELLA BLOWING BOWS  
YOU COULD LISTEN TO IT YOU WOULD LISTEN TO HIT  
GENERATIONS OF SAND MOVIN BY THE WINDS  
THE POWER EARTH RATTLINGS  
THE POWER MOVING MY VOICE OUR CHOICE  
THE POWER OF YOU MY PEOPLE RELATE LINGERING  
THAT'S THE HOME MURRI PEOPLE TALK ABOUT  
ALL YOU RELATIONS NORTH ARE EVERYTHING  
ALL YOU RELATIONS EAST ARE EVERYTHING  
ALL YOU RELATIONS WEST ARE THINGS RING  
ALL YOU RELATIONS SOUTH ARE THINGS RING  
THAT'S OUR WAYS SINGING EARTH REST  
THAT HAVE WAYS SUNG TEEMED WITH LIFE  
OLD WAY SWIFT AWAY  
GOOD TAMED YOUNG WAY  
WASTE AWAY BAD SECRET  
SOMETHING THERE FROM DOWN THERE JOY SAD BLUES  
IS TALKIN TO US FELLA BLOWING  
THE POWER OF YOU MY PEOPLE MOVE YOU  
WE HAVE UNDO HATRED PLEDGED TO EDGED  
WE HALF NOT EARTH A DOOMSDAY LEAD  
YOUR SOUL IS PART TURMOIL COILED DAT LAND  
ALL YOU EASTERN LAND ARE MY RELATIONS  
YOUR HEART IS PART TRADED ROUGH DAT LAND  
ALL YOU WESTERN LAND ARE MY RELATIONS  
ALL YOU SACRED SOUTHERN ARE MY RELATIONS  
GENERATIONS OF SANDS MOVING BY THE WINDS  
ALL YOU ARE MY RELATIONS MIXED ELOQUENTLY  
AS LIFE GOES ON

Lionel Fogarty

# Dreamtime

The first homo sapiens is  
we aborigines.  
The different ideas 'bout origins  
only you running human like people  
present state  
This old naturally wise earth  
not their scientific knowledge  
Brothers million love remains  
outside nowadays  
But savage are there commonly believed  
Theory of evolution we developed  
things living as original forms of lifes.  
Sisters modern human existence  
not in there mixed.  
Come brief kindly born earth  
making scientist naive  
the related common ancestors.  
WE NOT APES  
maps are in your sapiens  
unwise species.  
Don't we create spirits  
the first and everlasting two  
every Murri distribution of wealth  
we done in this country  
so we mustn't pay tax  
on our homing wealth  
that stays within.  
We are the first or last  
human being  
homo sapiens, aborigines  
Well tell we deep  
private thoughts.

Lionel Fogarty

# Gibar Magic

A young magic man saw there was  
no mountains left by this  
land cos of man's destruction  
So he blow magic and said  
Bajeirjeir jungamu  
be there a mountain in front of me  
And there was a great mountain  
where people gather at the body  
of it, to dance from grass  
trees and animal lives  
So it rained and water came  
down from the mountain creating  
a foundation of harmony  
Then after many years a  
big storm come rushing  
flood flowed over every hut  
and lightning hit trees causing  
fires, everything was like  
a bombed land where people  
are helpless and the mountain  
was dying, then the young  
magic man came back  
from his travels and sang  
out to the people, here here  
live in a Nala Nala  
it is a hole, where you will be  
safe for a while  
Now here the magic man  
gave a powerful blowing  
magic that all storm wind  
and flood waters lightning  
disappeared and cool air  
became fresh cleaner and  
the people and animals came  
out giving thanks to this  
young magic man.  
And he heard their thanks and  
smiled and a smile you will  
see in any Aboriginal

Lionel Fogarty

# Love

Love ..... walk with me  
Love ..... waken with me  
Love ..... is a black newborn  
Camp fringe dwellers are my love  
Love not seen in cities  
Love is my Father  
Love is my Mother  
Scrubs are hid in bush love  
And we say  
Love's mine.  
Love is alive and received.  
Love is a kangaroo  
Love is an emu  
Love is the earth  
Love is the love of voice  
Love is my friend.  
And what about us?  
Well, love smells.  
Us Murris know  
It's love in bad love.  
Give us love. Give us love.  
Our Dreamtiming is our love.  
Cath my love over a fire  
Fire of love.  
Culture is our love.  
Culture is ourself in love.  
The school won't give you love  
So we black power give you love  
Proud and simply  
Love is the love  
To our lands love.  
Love walk with me  
Love awaken with me  
Now give us the true love.

Lionel Fogarty

# Mad Souls

I am a moody Murri  
my temper as black as me.  
I am a moody Murri  
drink and smoke.  
Sail me away to Africa.  
Yes, I'm a moody Murri  
I live to swear  
and shit anywhere.  
I am the moody Murri  
don't like Aussies  
don't like Asians.  
You'd love to meet me.  
I'll tell you  
go live where you come from.  
I am the Murri black  
here forever.  
Sometimes can't stand my own people  
some sell off  
some sell out.  
I am the blackfella you need  
in governments.  
If I am asked about, pay the rent  
I'll give it a go mate.  
I am the moody blue Murri.  
Please don't take offence  
your own negative reply.  
I am not mad  
but glad.  
Roots grown out  
mingling with shining desire  
free our dreams.  
Yet you people miss what I am  
and  
I am the moody Murri  
my temper as black as me.

Lionel Fogarty

# Manipulation Modifies Your Structures

Verbal communication is what we like  
Verbal knowledge is what we like  
Reading ability in talking we like  
Our components of language is stronger  
Than criteria type trends  
Our vocabulary is a mixed world-over  
Our new trend co-existences are words in medium spirits  
Formation comes from techniques etc  
Matter concepts requires characteristics  
Mother's spoken words visually transition personal individual speeches orientated

Educated tests are an admission to  
Dependency of whitefella interviews  
Educate quantitative human based degrees must give greater technological  
importance  
To aborigines arts workforces  
Verbal bull forms activity to this stage  
Verbal bull dust relates modern graduates  
Our age video cd's and tapes are cramming  
Children's aspired relevant solving  
Our old memory social reality are utility to recipes imperative inherent to levels  
Foundation only develops by black jarjum's (children)  
Handling problem-solving  
Listening in rich atmospheres and giving back respective points within learning

Lionel Fogarty

# Mingom Treatment If Possible

Your morning cried  
made me want to die  
I like to die with the water hen  
with the turtle the porpoises  
the fish; even the porcupines  
I like to die with the kangaroo emu snakes and opossums  
I like to dead with the goanna birds and seagulls butterfish  
even pelicans koalas; eaglehawks  
I like to dead with all natures brothers and sisters  
I love to die with my body in the boughs up high in a tree  
I love to die without any black white singing speaking or being at my funeral  
I love my bones to be dried out then put in cave; I love to die wrapped in bark  
About six or three feet deep dug out  
Then the logs put by my sides and branches to make a platform  
Put the bark over me and fill in my body with earth  
I love to die with singing; dancing and crying around my grave  
I like to hear while I'm laying dead the political cultural speakers and fires all  
night till dawn  
I love to die with my Aboriginal freedom colours all around me  
I love to have a funeral with live music played by yidaki (didjeridoo)  
even a song by our greatest singers; protest cultural singing  
I love all my Murri people to come to my funeral; I don't want one miggloo  
(white person) there  
I love to die and live on in Dreaming I came from  
I love to die and be buried in any Murri land

Lionel Fogarty

# Nightmare

Stain our tears

in those eyes of mine

Forward in wind

They shot

Hands Down

the long black barrel

gun

Jungle-green ripened

in red

Snake

Nightmare path.

Lionel Fogarty

# Planet Earth

There is a country  
    burned of ashes  
            far beyond the stars  
where stands a skilful war  
    Left below  
            so calm, so cool  
This country mine  
    weeps away falling dews  
Leaves them foolish men  
    but one, who will command the chang  
There, above the noise  
Sweet peace crowned country  
Awaits our beauty  
    Smiles

Lionel Fogarty

## Quick Sing (Translation)

I can see a lot of people coming  
little black baby  
you must respect the moon  
you must praise the sun  
you must seek love with the star.  
Little black baby hear your  
song: "That's our country."  
The willy wagail  
will bring the message  
the kookaburra  
will laugh when you cry sad  
to make your world happy.  
Baby crying  
wake up little baby  
old good catch  
all me and you to  
love a man singing out.  
Oh little baby sing  
sing the feelings of  
what am I doing in this flat country  
I come from not here but long away.  
Yea little baby our ear love  
your sounds in the wind  
now rain coming and  
that clever doctor helps.  
Little black kid your auntie  
loves you. Even uncle loves you.

Lionel Fogarty

## Remember Something Like This

Long ago a brown alighted story was told  
as a boy looked up on the hall walls  
water flowed to his eyes  
for Starlight was carrying snake in his shirt  
gut belly  
and around the fires a tall man  
frightened the mobs that black eyes promised  
that night at giant tree, way up  
bushes crept in the ant hill  
was the wild blackfella  
from up north, they said.  
Soldier chained him down at the waterhole  
but as they bent to dip, sip  
behind their backs, old man Waterflow  
flew clear, magic  
undoing the shackles, without keys  
or sounds of saw  
saw . . . nuh . . . you didn't saw him.  
He's old Waterflow, even I'm too young  
to remember everything.  
Yet clever than pictures them show off  
making fun of old Boonah  
sitting outside waiting for dreaming  
to come in reality.  
After that somebody broke into the store.  
Oh, the police were everywhere  
at every door, roof, in laws  
Where's this and that, you know.  
So they find out where him came from  
by looking at the tracks.  
He's headed for the caves  
just near Milky Way.  
Happy in strength, we took off  
but the hills hid this tribal  
bull-roaring feather foot  
under Jimmy's Scrub  
place up deep  
where you have to leave smoke  
if you want to hunt there

If you don't, you'll get slewed . . .  
On earth our people are happy  
but we couldn't find that food.  
Musta been up the Reservoir  
or expecting a life to run over near Yellow Bar cave  
again.  
But we bin told, one man got badly porcupine.  
Bring him home and not supposed to.  
So him get sick, all life time  
like green hands touch Murri legs  
that's why you don't swim too late  
at this creek created.  
A spoiled boy one afternoon, went repeating  
the bell bird singing.  
And he went and went  
and sent to Green Swamp, back of the grid.  
Then as eels were caught  
Aunties sang out, this the biggest  
I've ever seen.  
Come boys get more wood, we'll stay  
here all night.  
So sat waiting, a bit dark, tired light  
the lines pulling in slowly  
for fish seem to be in message  
but two-headed creature appeared  
legs chucked back  
fires went out  
the fish swam back  
we raced home.  
All cold that night, back of the bend  
and rocks.  
Just near the bunya tree you can see  
this middle age woman, long black hair  
walk past our Nanna Rosies' place  
up to the graveyards  
but she flows  
and many moons came shone in our minds  
watching Dimmydum and Kingy doing corroboree  
on stage  
in front of her children.  
A light story past thru windows  
on to you all

never forget  
remember more . . .

Poet's Note: Boonah: peace maker

Lionel Fogarty

# Some People Have No Respect For Our Belief

Jesus I learned you lived and lived  
Jesus we heard you died and die  
Jesus I see them painting of you so white  
Jesus I hear them sing, you lackey of God they sang.  
Jesus I know people today use you wrong  
    they came with guns in hand  
    shot our minds with  
    untrue words

Black – the meaning of sin  
Black – the heathen savages  
Black – the false, the lies  
Black – the inhuman without a home and culture  
These pink skinned people say “You light of God”  
    and make us wash black sins to be close to white.

O, Jesus, if so you were true  
You were black  
    fighting against a white regime.

O, Jesus, they tear away our hearts  
    that yell for Nature

They will do things of tension, fear, control,  
    death, brutality and murder to our Aboriginal people’s  
    beliefs.

Why they must do this O, Jesus, this once Jesus

All in the name of you

Jesus Christ

    “Offering, offering, hear the pennies fall  
    Everyone for Jesus, the Church shall have them all”

Lionel Fogarty

# The Mununjali Exemption Man

The Department of Family Services and Abos lied to me.  
My grandfather came to Purga at 'bout 19 Or 18 hundreds  
And married a Murri woman who gave him sons.  
In 1922 he was given exemption certificate from the Acts.  
He came from Mununjali people who lives in Beaudesert.  
My grandfather was gammin and told he was free,  
but when his son hit the manager his son was sent to Barambah.

Now my two grandfathers are dead  
and my parents can't remember any things they said  
or done cause in those days it was hard to tell.

So all I want to know is who was my great-great-great-grandfather's parents?  
Now some of these good Christians must have paper records.

You see brothers and sisters I don't need whiteman papers to prove,  
but I want it to fight for legal –  
our land and cultural heritage rights.

Purga my grandparents help built, now is not ours.  
Well look at the mixed up mess.

Oh great grandfather I can't hear your yarning 'bout our relations  
Oh great grandfather I have your grandchildren ready to take up the fight for our  
land  
and losted you were taken and I'm lacking, so why don't we all come together as  
a family  
and reissue free knowledge.

Now my great grandfather was an aboriginal man dat is divide from me  
'cos the history has changed camps. But I have moved too,  
yet I find a marriage certificate to you great-great-grandfather,  
and I will find you waiting in Mununjali Dreaming realities.

Lionel Fogarty