

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker), "The Dispossessed"
From *We Are Going* (Brisbane: Jacaranda, 1964)

Peace was yours, Australian man,
with tribal laws you made,
Till white Colonials stole your peace
with rape and murder raid;
They shot and poisoned and enslaved
until, a scattered few,
Only a remnant now remain,
and the heart dies in you.
The white man claimed your hunting grounds
and you could not remain,
They made you work as menials
for greedy private gain;
Your tribes are broken vagrants now
Wherever whites abide,
And justice of the white man
means justice to you denied.
They brought you Bibles and disease,
the liquor and the gun:
With Christian culture such as these
the white command was won.
A dying race you linger on,
Degraded and oppressed,
Outcasts in your own native land,
you are the dispossessed.
When Churches mean a way of life,
as Christians proudly claim,
And when hypocrisy is scorned
and hate is counted shame,
Then only shall intolerance die
and old injustice cease,
And white and dark as brothers find
equality and peace.
But oh, so long the wait has been,
so slow the justice due,
Courage decays for want of hope,
and the heart dies in you.