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 HAVEMOVED 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 RATTINGS
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
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
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
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

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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