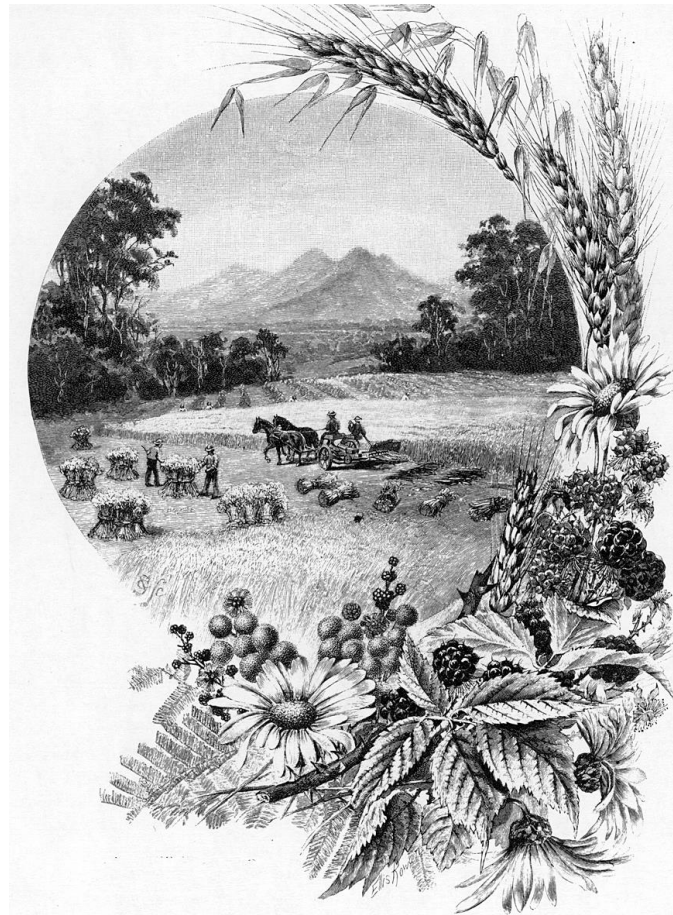


BUSH BALLADS AND BULLDUST

The Australian Collection
by
Marc Glasby

Latest version © August 2016



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Welcome

Welcome to Bush Ballads and Bulldust. This book of verse is the result of many years travelling around Australia experiencing her natural wonders. It is the result of the profound affection I have developed for her wide open spaces and her 'far horizons'.

I keep changing the introduction to this book because I never seem to be able to say in ordinary words what I seem to be able to capture when I write verses. I have constantly wondered why I write poems and where the inspiration comes from and I have come to the conclusion that it is my own particular type of therapy. It is a way I can express myself when something impresses, shocks or makes me happy or sad.

These days poetry still exists in popular songs but poems not set to music never make any money. It would be nice if someone, somewhere, enjoys at least some of the words I have written.

If you have read this far then I hope you will be that person.

Marc Glasby. August 2016

Dedication

I dedicate this book to all the unknown men and women who came to a harsh and hostile country and did their best to make it their home. To the women who lived alone for weeks and months while their husbands were away droving. To the sandalwood cutters who opened up the first tracks into the heartland of Western Australia. To the gold prospectors who lived unbelievably hard lives while they dreamed of striking it rich. To the stockmen and the drovers, to the squatters and most of all to those unnamed souls who died alone in the outback and were buried in anonymous graves or had their bones scattered by dingoes through out the hinterland of Australia.

To all the forgotten heroes who were just living out their lives as best they could and who, each in their own small way, contributed to the building of a nation.



Mokhayber

ART STUDIO

ARTS CRAFTS • PICTURE FRAMING

NOISEWORKS
MARK SETWORTH
RED DIRT

ANZAC

Little Jack was only one
his father's pride and only son
He grew up fast beneath the sun
An Australian was he

By ten years old he'd fired a gun
go bare back riding just for fun
and by fourteen his schooling done
he lived both wild and free

Then two years on the mother land
its empire called to lend a hand
and blood was spilled upon the sand
around Gallipoli

When duty called he volunteered
and war was all his mother feared
Young men whose arms and legs were sheared
were sent home constantly

When Jack's turn came he faced it well
while all around his comrades fell
Young men all blown straight to hell
in a land across the sea

No longer through the bush he'd roam
They wrapped him up and sent him home
The ship ploughed on through ocean foam
that he would never see

Jack lies buried in a grave
His life for King and country gave
His young life lost so he could save
the likes of you and me

When April rolls around each year
and old men march or shed a tear
for those who are no longer here
Think of Gallipoli

And when the old men have all gone
their legacy will linger on
Forever we'll look back upon
their shining memory

April 1999 Townsville

Australia

I am the bushland dawning
in the stillness of the morning
I am the sunlit plains
and the mighty river's flow

I'm the drought and I'm the flood
I'm the earth and I'm the blood
I'm the breezes ever blowing
where the wild pandanas grow

I'm the stockman and the drover
and I've walked this land all over
and I share forgotten secrets
that the wild ones only know

I'm the dust of outback trails
I'm the wind that fills the sails
I'm the city and the country
and the first high mountain snow

I'm the Murray River flowing
and the cattle softly lowing
I'm the kangaroo and emu
and the sunset's orange glow

I'm the Southern Cross at night
the explorer's guiding light
I'm the place that tells the traveller
that it's better to go slow

I am Banjo and I'm Lawson
I am Kelly and I'm Mawson
I am the Melbourne Cup
and the Sydney Easter Show

I am wild and still untamed

and there's beauty in my name
I am the land Australia
where the lucky people go.

December 1999

Townsville (Two verses added while cruising down the Murray River on Proud
Mary 2000)



Breaker

A breaker came our way last eve
with such a tale to tell
that even now I don't believe
although he sold it well

He was riding out the back blocks
seeking out a mob
for he'd fallen down on hard times
and couldn't find a job

He rode the hills and valleys
and traced the rivers course
looking for the hoof prints
to lead him to a horse

He'd heard the local legend
about a yearling mare
of those who tried to catch her
and those who wouldn't dare

He worked his life with horses
and thought he knew them well
but now he's having second thoughts
about the mare from hell

His tracking skills were tested
unto their very ends
and luck, he sorely pressed it
on luck his life depends

Ten days he rode the saddle
ten days he tracked the herd
until at last he cornered them
I'll take him at his word

He swears the horses vanished

except the yearling mare
she turned and then she fixed him
with one unearthly stare

His horse just turned and bolted
and threw him to the ground
and then the mare was on him
with one enormous bound

She bit him and she kicked him
his body black and blue
she kept on till she'd licked him
he swears that its all true

And when at last she'd finished
she vanished in thin air
his broken bones were proof enough
that she had been right there

And with his story over
he walked in to the night
and with the coming of the day
we found that he was right

They found his body broken up
ten miles away at most
the one we got the story from
had been the breaker's ghost
December 1999 Townsville

Bush Verse

The shaking shadows waking
through the morning's misty haze
The morning bright with dappled light
that heralds summer days

And on the far horizon
the hills are burnished gold
Where now as for a million years
another day unfolds

The gum trees by the river bed
stand reaching for the sky
And somewhere in the distance
a mournful curlew cries

All about, the endless plain
grows warm with morning sun
Where spinifex and grass trees grow
where roo and emu run

No rain clouds in the distance
to soak the cracked red earth
To wash the ants from bleached white bones
to help the land give birth

No raindrops fall from heaven
It hasn't rained for years
And all that man has left behind
is blood, and sweat, and tears

For those who came to tame her
departed long ago
Dreams buried deep by desert sands
that never cease to blow

Dawn drifts into morning

then into afternoon
And day gives way again to night
to greet the rising moon

The cycle goes unbroken
from year to passing year
Land sleeping and unwoke
To rise and reappear



Bushy

Its ten miles as the crow flies
from here to billabong
And that's where I will have a blow
back out where I belong

It's been a while since I've been bushed
or swapped yarns with a dag
Or been out duffing clean skins
Or slept upon my swag

I've diced my city job at last
They said I dragged the chain
by hiding in the dunny
when I ever felt the strain

I'm happy now as Larry was
I've lobbed back in the bush
I'm waltzing my matilda
and life is pretty cush

Now city life was on the nose
with ratbags drinking plonk
Galahs in cars with blaring horns
that honk and honk and honk

I'm taking Shank's pony
before I have a spell
and get back to hard yakka
by sinking bores and wells

Out beyond the black stump
where blowies never tire
and boiling up me billy
upon a bonza fire

I'll always be a bushy
who's dying to shoot through
I'll have a gig around the bend
and rarely have a blue

I'll get stuck into life again
away from city smoke
wandering the outback trails
a very happy bloke

May 2000 Mackay

Cattle Dog

The old cattle dog
lying under the shed
Fidgets as dreams
go around in his head

His weary old bones
are now stiff and sore
but he dreams of a time
when he welcomed his chores

Leaping and nipping
and pushing the herd
He'd act on command
at his master's word

He dreams of long days
beneath the warm sun
and remembers the joy
of a real flat-out run

His master was hard
but never unfair
and reward for success
was a ruffle of hair

But the boss has retired
and there's no farming now
No sheep and no cattle
no tractor or plough

But the old dog still dreams
of happier days
When he worked in the fields
and he slept in the hay

His spirit still yearns

to 'Get round!' or 'Get Back!'
and to follow the tractor
back home down the track

But now he's worn out
and he gets some odd looks
as he limps round the yard
and rounds up the chooks

For a working dog works
'till his last day is done
and his ghost hits the fields
at a real flat-out run

June 2000
Mackay



City Dreams

The bright lights of the city
Have lured me away
From bushland plains and mulga scrub
from plains of rich red clay

Away from the serenity
to noise and toil and strife
To pay the bills and cure the ills
of living city life

Into a world of buildings
and people crowded round
of cars and fumes and airplanes
a world of ceaseless sound

I long to take my swag again
into the far outback
To walk the trails and feel again
the sun upon my back

To make camp by a billabong
cook dinner by a fire
Lie back and see the stars at night
then silently retire

But here I sit beside a screen
a keyboard and a phone
My time belongs to someone else
my life is not my own

Down below the city sprawls
around and out of sight
But in my mind I'm wandering
my fantasies take flight

And once again I'm on the road

not knowing where I'm bound
I'm off into the wilderness
somewhere I can't be found

August 1999
Darwin

Cocky

Like my father before me
I work on the land
and I help feed a nation from sunlight and sand

I've seen the bush burn
and I've seen the land flood
So I give it my all with my sweat and my blood

I've seen the world change
as I've seen the sun rise
and I've seen my stock die right in front of my eyes

I've watched while my neighbours
walk away from their land
and the city folk care but they don't understand

Six generations
have toiled on this earth
the land of our dreams, the land of our birth

The land that we work
is what makes us whole
To just walk away is like losing our soul

My son's in the city
there's no future here
and my wife works in town for there's more bills to clear

I've seen how our town
has started to die
No bank and no doctor, not hard to see why

Pollies fly in
and then out the same day
Like sheep or like donkeys they bleat and they bray

When election time comes
they promise the earth
but their promises have neither substance or worth

So when the last farmer
walks off of the land
When you import your food, maybe you'll understand

When all we have now
is taken away
You'd better believe that you're all going to pay

February 2000
Townsville



Old Halls Creek

The red dust road that leads from town
and back into the range
was traveled once by hardy souls
to whom this land was strange

They came to Old Halls Creek to dig
to pan the streams for gold
they came with dreams of striking rich
of wealth as yet untold

All they owned they carried in
from ports along the coast
Picks and spades and billy tins
and flour from trading posts

By foot, by mule, by cart and horse
they flooded into town
but many fell along the way
to crocs, to thirst or sometimes drowned

Some struck it rich, some just survived
some left and some returned
In all who crossed the barren hills
a lust for gold ore burned

And all at once the gold ran out
the town began to die
The diggings all stood silent
beneath a cloudless sky

Years came and went but little changed
beneath the burning sun
until at last the road was sealed
and change began to come

But even now the old dirt road

will lead you back in time
to ruins down beside a creek
where miners lived and died

September 1998
Halls Creek

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<http://www.wanowandthen.com/Free-E-Books.html>