

WE WALKED ON SACRED GROUND

by Judy Kenny

The longest occupation of any race in the world...
The longest isolation of any people from all the rest...
By far the greatest number of Australians who have ever lived
have been members of the Aboriginal race...
Wandering... developing spirituality, not materially
Ceremonies, lore, kinship, sharing, settling, 47,000 years
Shattered ... in 1788

The land is our mother, our life force
The mother which nurtures, helps us to grow,
Has protective feelings towards us
How many people would take a knife and cut their mother?
This is what you have done with your mining and your roads

Oppressed, shortened life expectancy,
This adult generation educated only to grade 3
Shuffled around, separated from our parents, rejected in the work place
We are a long way from where the institutional Church is today
But our God doesn't sit up there
He is... a part of us

Lord from which side of the river am I asking my questions?
I am compelled in all honesty to say "I am racist", I am part of the original sin
Teach me how the oppressed can be grace to my sinfulness, questions to my answers.

We named God long before Christianity came.
We dream... our dream is God himself
Our symbols are symbols shared
We go from water-hole to water-hole seeking life
We paint ourselves with the colour of liturgy
We light our camp fires, circle their purifying smoke
Celebrate corroborees, sacrifice food
The way of Aboriginal people is not far from the way Jesus taught.
Talk is like the wind...
talk goes away

It is the heart that remains
As I tell the story of the past in the evening
I know that my God is an Aboriginal
My God speaks my language
Creation told me there was a God...
When I went fishing in the river I saw my God there...
When I meet with my people the Spirit is among us
I walk strong and proud and tall as an Aborigine

Lord, help us to gather fragments of all our people together,
to build slowly, actively but patiently, a new humanity.
All our roots feed into the tree whose deepest root
is that of the Aboriginal people
set deeply in the soil of this our land.
Free us from the burden of history and bring us home.

