

Verses by the same writer:

Gumtops (1935)
Forgotten People (1936)
Sun-Freedom (1938)
Memory of Hills (1940)
At a Boundary—in collabor-
ation with John Inga-
mells (1941)
News of the Sun (1942)
Content are the Quiet
Ranges (1943)



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bralgah, Unknown Land and Macquarie Harbour appeared first in *Poetry*; *Professor's Joke* in *The Publicist*; *Impossibilities, Australia, Land of the Gods, Billai and Yaraandoo* in the *Jindyworobak Anthologies*.

The generosity of Mr. Val Crowley has made this publication possible.

UNKNOWN LAND

by
REX INGAMELLS



ADELAIDE

1943

Thousands of miles of stern Australian coast
will front the main when it is angered most,
smashing moving mountains when they thunder in,
and stand the sunlit conquerors of the din . . .
Thousands of miles of seaweed beach will sigh
contentedly as gulls are screaming high,
silvered in sunglare . . . Then the leagues of caves
will give unhurried answers to the waves;
and sombre sandhills silently abide
the drowsy heat from dawn till eventide,
stirring but sometimes, when the warm winds lift
a spray of sand to make an inch of drift . . .

Australia's long, lone coast of capes and bays,
vast gulfs and pebbled inlets, steep arrays
of salt-ribbed seaweed, shelly beaches, scarred
cliff-granite, rock-jut, creamy sand-shelves, marred
of smooth perfection only by rain-runnels
or, at low tide, by tiny sea-worm tunnels . . .
Australia's long, lone coastline will preserve
an unassailable, secret soul, observe
its own communion . . . into which will enter
no whisper of strange empires where they centre:
Australia will rebut a hundred races
if such envision only alien places
as source of truth . . . Though a hundred generations
bestride this land, though here they set their stations
and think them conquest-rooted, time will be
when each shall see its dead philosophy
as flotsam and jetsam, shredded into nought,
rebutted and scattered by a power it sought
to treat as non-existent—this land's heart
of fervent dream, woven when pale stars start
out of the sky, woven as parrots veer
through tangled branches which the sunrays spear,
woven of inland ranges and their streams,
woven of wedge-tail eagles' paths in beams
of sungold shafted through the zenith cloud,
woven of boobook's taunting, of the proud
silence of crow-still desert noon, of glints

on billabongs at night, of sun-up tints
on mulga, mallee, gibbers, flints and dunes,
of clear-eyed stars, of aeon suns and moons,
of kookaburra laughter and commotion,
and of the age-old conference with Ocean . . .

O Land, in whose high heart Divinity
and Earth are one, when will our spirits see?
As time goes on, and age piles up on age,
Australia, be our race's pilgrimage!

SING REQUIEM

Sing requiem for the aboriginal
corroboree, for nesting songs of birds,
for the massacred soft-padded animal
driven off by hard-hoofed alien flocks and herds.

Sing requiem for brown men done to death
by greedy cattle kings who grabbed their land,
by selfish pioneers who stole their breath
with waterholes and turned the bush to sand.

Sing requiem for simple ways of life,
for trusting happy eyes of birrahlees,
for tribal people watching all the rife
delight of sunset round the hills and seas.

Sing requiem for such; and, by the powers,
make what amends we can, for guilt is ours.