

Hal Judge

LOST DREAMING

Possessed by the bold November sun
or the flippant breeze
I asked a black man
right there in the plaza
about the Dreaming
His eyes scanned the landscape
of concrete and glass
He mumbled
Yer got no bloody right to ask
Since title was extinguished
and Uluru sliced with lasers
and sold for pavers
to the home improvement movement
Shame job.
I apologized lamely
People ate faster

He saw the questions in my eyes
Turning away, his words halted me
If yer had the time, brother
(he knew I hadn't)
On the dusty steps we shared a smoke

If yer soul could walk
three hundred miles
I'd take you to the peninsula
the Guddy Snake spirit
break spears in the river
and speak seven languages.

Take yer to Mount Budawang
that sees as far as Guluga
watching the ocean rise and sink
for a couple a thousand years
black people hunt

till the white ants come to eat the wood
like cheese cake.

I'd take yer to the ragged tent
with the torn black and red
and the emu egg yellow
and we'd march in the face of the world
700,000 marchin feet
in the flame of the torch
of the Sydney Games
past savage ranks of unbadged blue
with beautiful rage in our teeth
and pride of people whose bare feet
know the land
If yer had a lifetime of lives.

And what's your Dreaming white fella?

My face was red from the sun.
I looked in my empty hands
fingers trembling
like a wounded European angel.
I dwelt on it
and finally said
It's in the nature of dreams ...
fleeting.
When I turned
he was ...
gone.

[Note: Guddy Snake is the spirit of the Molonglo River. Breaking spears in the river is a sign of peace. Guluga refers to Mount Dromedary visible 90 km from Mount Budawang.]

20