

Sing me a Kanda tribal song, before we say goodbye!
Rejoice, mourn not, O Kanda, this is no tribal loss.
The rope is strong enough to climb. I tied it to the sky.
Four songs climbed my rope to form the Southern Cross.

Rejoice, mourn not, O Kanda, this is no tribal loss.
Four daughters live forever, under their father's eye.
Four songs climbed my rope to form the Southern Cross.
Mululu to Centaurus changed. The Kanda will not die.

PETER WELLS

NOTE ON THE PANTOUM FORM

The Pantoum is a Malay poetic form never before, to my knowledge, used in English. It is very exacting, yet highly effective. The first two lines introduce one strand of thought; the next two deal with a second strand which both contrasts with, and complements, the first thought. The second line of the first verse becomes the first line of the second verse, and a new line is added to develop the first strand or theme. Similarly, the fourth line of the first verse becomes the third line of the second verse to develop the second strand, and so on throughout the poem. The two strands of thought are, as it were, plaited. Finally, the last line of the poem has to be a repetition of the very first line, thus bringing the complete idea in full circle and tying the strands off neatly. Mrs Ruth Mangan, in choosing an Aboriginal legend of how the Southern Cross came to jewel the Australian sky, has woven an exotic tress which echoes the Kanda chant with its ruminative progression and timelessness, admirably marrying form to subject content.