

JOHN KERSLAKE

ABORIGINAL BURIAL

Red land, brown grass, spinifex
The silent sun cracking rocks
Call of the crow unanswered,
Shriek of the trees saved for the rain,
The plains fall to the burnt hills
Where my mother hid for my birth
And threw her pain across the sky;
Now my flesh is with the earth.

Sounds of rain on fertile dust
And water laughing off my skin,
Singing with the grassbirds
Flowers catch the wind,
The plains flow to secret hills
Where manhood leapt from the night
The pain of circumcision;
Now my bones lie still and white.

Sleek skin, warm breast, soft eyes
That cast you in their depth
And the musk of this woman
Calling madly for your child,
The plains lead to that silent tree
Where love flowed to one sound
My lover's cry across the hills;
My spirit lives on from that ground.