

*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)



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# 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.