

The background of the left side of the image is a close-up photograph of paperbark tree bark, showing its characteristic layered, fibrous texture in shades of grey and brown. This texture is partially obscured by a dark green, semi-transparent rectangular overlay.

# Paperbark Wetlands

ten little multimedia poems  
lyricizing the Australian landscape

MELINDA IRVINE

# COPYRIGHT

*Paperbark Wetlands: 10 Multimedia Poems Lyricizing the Australian Landscape*

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# PREFACE

Welcome to “Paperbark Wetlands” my first eBook and a collection of multimedia poetry. I’ve been a reader of traditional poetry for most of my life, yet it is in the writing and construction of my own poems I have moved into a multimedia and transmedia forms.

The poems in this book all began differently. Sometimes as I was out strolling headlands in the late afternoon remembering times on the same path when a young girl: poems would emerge days later while journalling. At other times while out bushwalking with purpose in the Australian summer heat, inspired I’d settle under a tree with my notebook and scribble away until ants or unsettling thunderstorms would move me forward to my destination. The poems crafted later in a coffee shop or in the car while that storm hit. At other times I was after a specific photograph for an unrelated task and months later a poem would leap out of the image I was editing. A few of these poems have even been written here (unplanned) in the author publishing tool as new possibilities in the pictures presented themselves.

But no matter how they emerged, all these poems represent a shift in my thinking toward poetry. For as I began presenting them on my blog new pieces of media would suggest themselves to me. Like adding little bits of video which felt like a tiny poem in themselves.

My shaky-hand iPhone videos, smartphone images, and bedroom recorded narration are all deliberately included to engage a tough 21st century audience with no time and almost infinite competition for their attention. Also I wanted to remain in the poem as if you were right there with me when I wandered the shoreline or my bare feet padded into the forest.

I invite you now to walk with me among the paperbarks and some of the magical places I have happened across during my lonely drives across the Australian landscape.

Mel Irvine (October 2016)



1

# PAPERBARK WETLANDS

barefoot forest steps

find sun-stained river grasses

windless and silent.

© 2016 Melinda Irvine



## AMONG THE PAPERBARKS

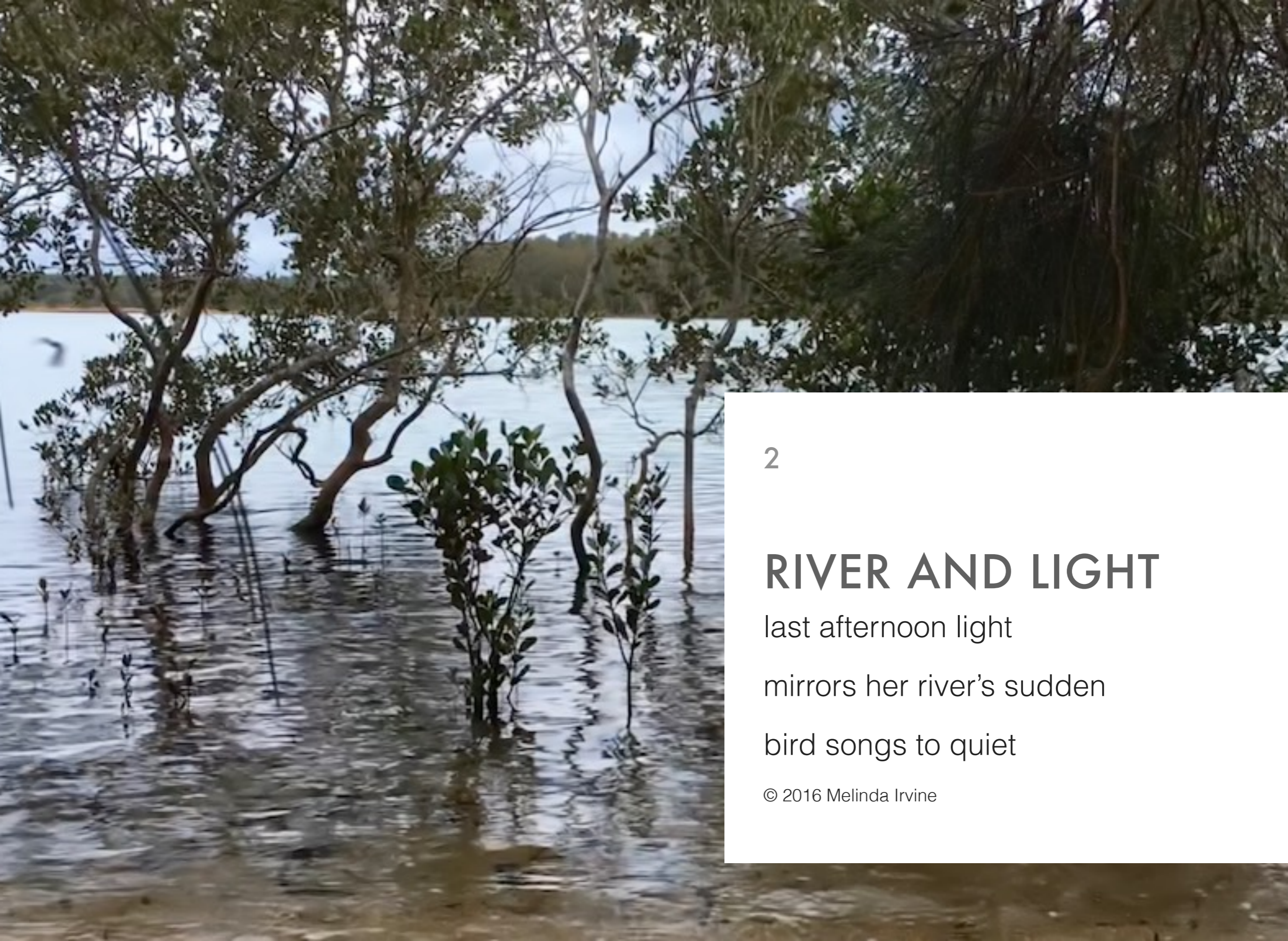
It is late afternoon in the magic of childhood places, tangled paperbarks hold the sacred space, my mind drifts away floating with the leaves, until rise and reality lead me back to the now.



## AMONG THE PAPERBARKS







2

## RIVER AND LIGHT

last afternoon light

mirrors her river's sudden

bird songs to quiet

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3

# LITTLE BLACK DOT

sun  
filled  
flowers  
wet grass  
Sunday sounds  
windy headland  
surfski paddler  
tiny black dot  
so far away  
little you  
with me  
here

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8





4

## MORNING AND MIST

early driving sun

behind wet mist and dew filled

cobwebs. rough bush stop.

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More than two days of driving ahead yet i am compelled to pull dad's old ute down a dirt track alongside the mist on the morning. I still remember my smartphone viewer filled with new-day wet cobwebs and the reflected shadows of trees.





5

## THE LEMON TREE FLATS

driving to the lemon tree flats  
i am a passenger  
for the first time  
in months (maybe longer) ...

laughing more than  
my body can remember  
i sit in back  
while we stop for lizards

lizards with beards  
and long tails  
(tails longer than our stories)  
sit inside shared binoculars.

gravel dust  
already dry road  
covers the signs back to town  
my head turned

until suddenly  
ancient granite  
fills the window  
and i can't find my sunglasses!

arcings gums shade our walk  
to a waterhole  
and dripping wet  
friends lay in the sun

laughing at the day ahead.  
someone calls  
to see grinding stones  
as hot as the sun

where the men before us  
where the women before us  
where the people before us  
remain

and water  
muddened by recent rain  
sits silent  
then continues

© 2015 Melinda Irvine

Traditional lands of the  
Aboriginal people of the  
Kwiambal language.





6

## GIRRINGUN GRASSLANDS

rain greened grassland slopes  
shield once esteemed trees' tiny  
purple companions

© 2015 Melinda Irvine





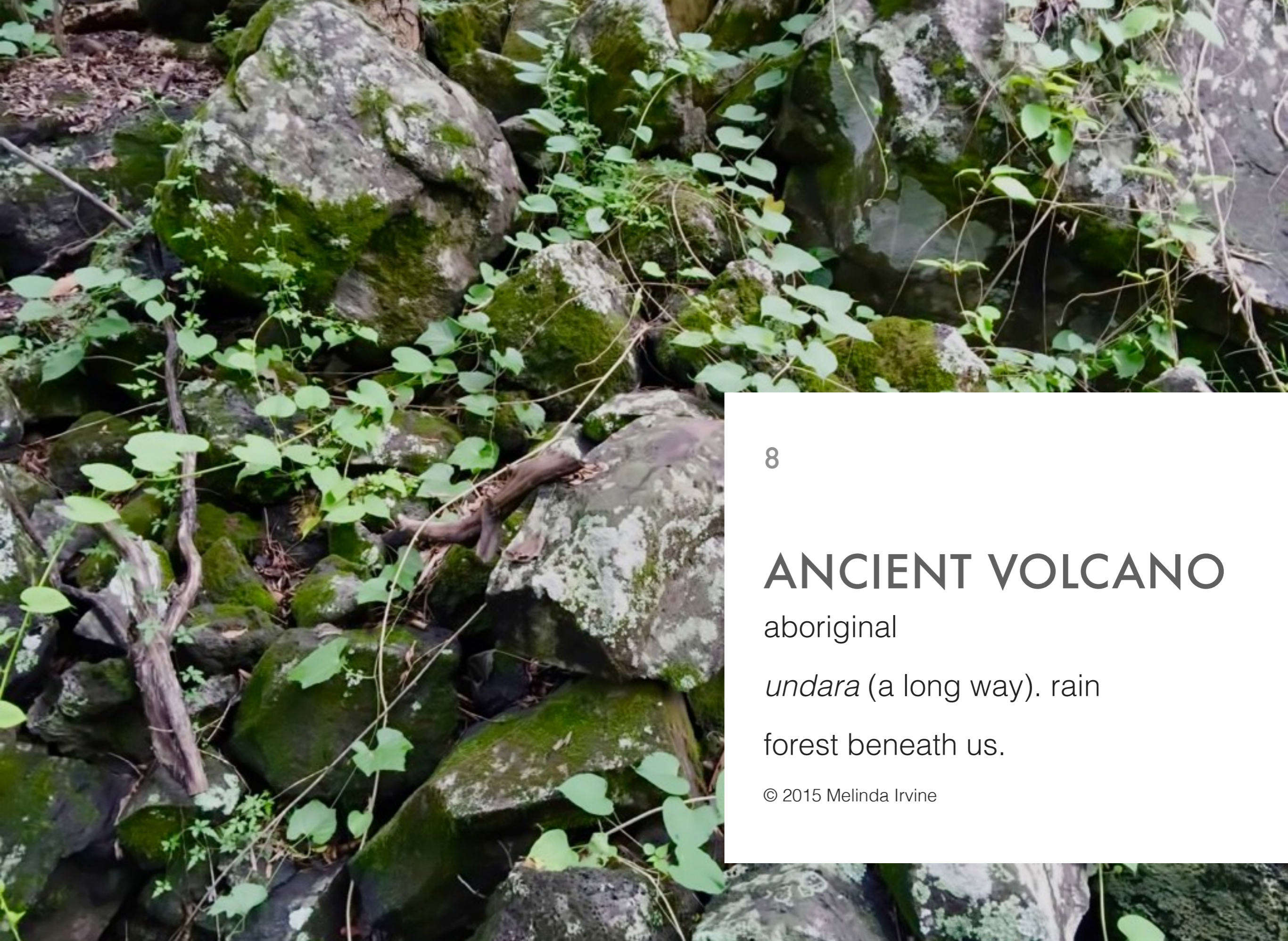
7

## DEATH IN THE OPEN

death comes as a shock  
sudden and startling  
my morose curiosity  
a sadness  
a lament  
for a lifeless form

© 2015 Melinda Irvine





8

## ANCIENT VOLCANO

aboriginal

*undara* (a long way). rain

forest beneath us.

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9

NORTH-WEST OF GOONDIWINDI



I'm about 97 miles north-west of Goondiwindi

I've got a road-train indicating: time to move along

and as I pass him on his right

I dip my headlights into the night

and the voice in my head it's playin' a north-bound song

I went down south, to see my mother's brother

laid into the dirt to a butcherbird's song

last wattle laid by his graveside

winter sun said his last goodbye

they were singing a hymn as I heard a north-bound song

I'm a coupla hundred north-west of Goondiwindi,

got a road-train right behind: moving me along,

the moon's out shining as my guide

memories of his last days fill my mind

as the voice in my head keeps playing a north-bound song

**Weeds fill the back of the  
Bannockburn cemetery, a  
peaceful place in early winter  
before the arrival of the wattle  
blooms.**



he always said he'd move on back to Queensland  
but the years fled by and he'd left his run too long  
and the last day of his life ...

was it when the diabetes took his sight?

left sitting in a chair, singing his north-bound song

I'm 600 odd miles north-west of Goondiwindi

I see a truck stop (I'm coffee craving) but I'm moving right along  
the sun's up rising on my right

I've been driving since late last night

while the voice in my head keeps playing a north-bound song

this voice spins my head, playing a north-bound song

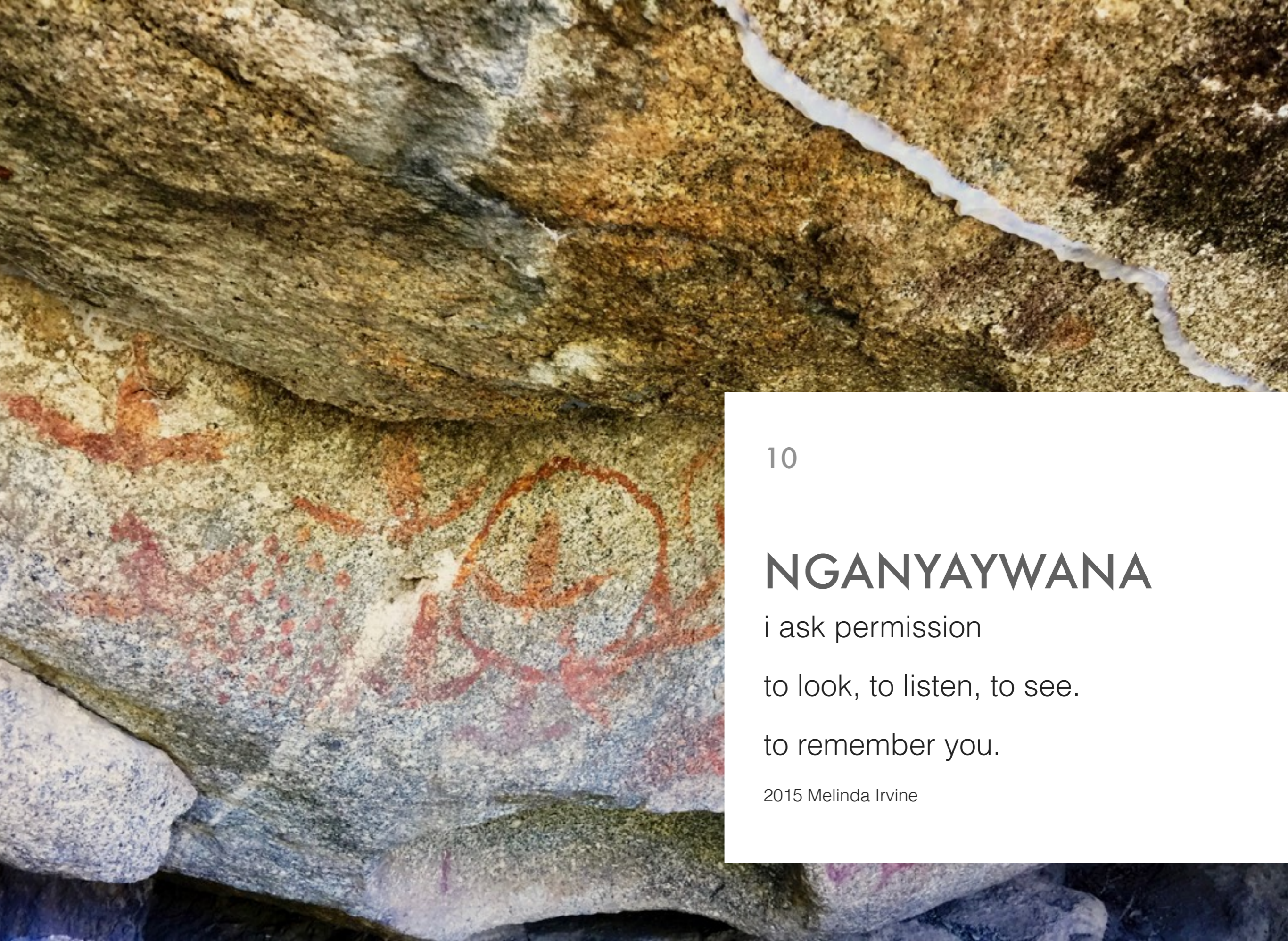
this voice in my head keeps playing his north-bound song

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**In the spring, the dirt road  
leading to the Bannockburn  
Cemetery is framed by flowering  
eucalypts and bush flowers:  
perhaps I too will rest there one  
day with my uncles.**

Setting up my guitar and little amp at the little bush cemetery before Uncle Lincoln's funeral, the staff at Thorley's in Inverell were so thoughtful and caring, unexpectedly creating a private moment of remembrance ...





10

# NGANYAYWANA

i ask permission

to look, to listen, to see.

to remember you.

2015 Melinda Irvine



11

# MEL AND JERRY





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mel Irvine is an Australian writer, poet and musician living between the Philippine Western Visayas and her home country. She spends her time in the Philippines as adopted mother to Jerry, a Filipino boy eight years old, who lost both his parents.

A slow learner, she has been her plugging away at her Bachelors degree in Philosophy and Literature externally through Murdoch University for more than a few years. But the good news is, she's finally finished that first book (and close to releasing the second).

Mel spends her time in the Philippines with Jerry, hanging out with the women and kids of the seaside Barangay Botongon, Estancia.

*My Uncle Richard A. Ward constructed this miniature cathedral on the family farm. It still has a little plaque showing the year it was built and also the year I was born.*

She provides free creative activities, art and craft supplies, music lessons and english tuition as time and resources permit. Her long-term goals include operating a dedicated after-school learning centre, inspiring the locals to implement an effective waste management and recycling program and legally adopting Jerry.

Back home in Australia you can find her on the phone calling Jerry making sure he did his homework, busking the streets with her guitar, performing poetry and songs in a bush hotel and at small gatherings. Or you might just find her wandering the broad Australian landscape gathering images, video and stories for her next book and scribbling out a poem.



## FINDING JERRY

One day last year (2015) in the Philippine school holidays a little boy followed a group of us to the beach. It was scorching hot and he had no shoes and cut bleeding feet. Jerry was so tiny and cute I thought he must have been 4 or 5 years old. My heart melted as the other kids told me his mother was dead, his father semi-paralysed by a stroke and his siblings scattered all over the country. The home and all their belongings, including his pets had been destroyed in the typhoon. Within 7 days I had got him a birth certificate, bought him clothes, shoes and toys and put him back in school. That's when he asked me if he could live with me. Of course I said no.

More than a year and a half has passed since that day and Jerry now lives with me full-time and I am investigating how to legally adopt him.

You can learn more about the [story of Jerry](#) and our life together by visiting my blog.



Jerry and his best friend Rolando





## LOVE THE PEOPLE YOU MEET

After volunteering in the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in February 2014, I stayed on to deliver my own self-managed humanitarian projects. The projects have all been funded by my family and friends matched by my own personal contributions.

Love the People You Meet is not a company, charity or NGO, it's a concept really and hopefully defines the work I have been doing.

[www.lovethepeopleyoumeet.com](http://www.lovethepeopleyoumeet.com)

All proceeds from the sale of this book support my self-funded humanitarian projects for the children of the Philippines.



The kids come to the house in the afternoons where we learn songs, dance, paint and draw, play guitar or watch documentaries and movies. Any donations help me in my goal to operate a dedicated learning centre.



## HELP

I am just a simple person who went overseas to help after a typhoon in the Philippines. More than 10,000 died or disappeared into the sea. I stayed. I adopted a little boy. Sometimes I meet people who are hungry or kids who aren't in school. I am not a charity or affiliated with any religions, agencies, or organisations. I live here with the little boy because I love him.

All of my projects are self-funded with help from [family and friends](#). I am slowly building an after-school learning centre.

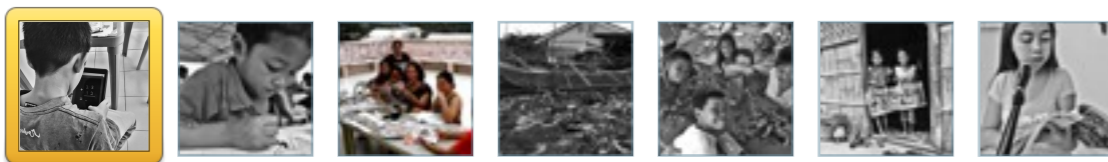
Please consider [paying for this book](#) or making a donation. Even small amounts can make a big difference to the people here.



## GALLERY 11.1 Self-funded Projects in the Philippines



Free tuition in maths and english for children including printed workbooks and stationary as well as digital apps.



### POVERTY

More than 26 million Filipinos live below the poverty line which includes more than 12 million people who live at subsistence levels or extreme poverty. What this really means is that:-

- 26 million Filipinos live on less than \$235 USD per month
- 12 million Filipinos earn less than \$165 USD per month and don't have enough money for basic food needs to satisfy the nutritional requirements set by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI)

[Philippine Statistics Authority \(PSA\) \(July 2015\)](#)

### NATURAL DISASTERS

In addition to extreme poverty, the people of the Philippines live every day at a high risk of becoming victims of a natural disaster. The latest World Risk Report (WRR 2014) ranks the Philippines *number 2 out of 171 countries*.

The 2014 World Risk Report indexes countries according to these four indicators:-

1. exposure towards natural hazards such as earthquakes, cyclones, flooding, drought and sea level rise,
2. susceptibility depending on infrastructure, food, housing and economic framework conditions,
3. coping capacities depending on governance, risk reduction, early warning, healthcare, social and material coverage and
4. adaptive capacities related to future natural hazards and the impacts of climate change.

The World Risk Report is published by [United Nations University](#) and the Alliance Development Works.

current  
World Risk Index  
(WRI) ranks the people  
of the Philippines # 2 out  
of 171 countries at risk of  
becoming a victim of a  
natural disaster.

Please consider paying for this little book (you decide the price). All proceeds keep me doing what I love: writing and producing books as well as helping the people of the Philippines. I love you.



## COMING SOON

Wander through 'My Mother's Garden' and rest for a while among the bush orchids and bright coloured flowers. Brush rainwater off spiky cactus prickles or spend time with mum's little hand-potted frogs, funny shaped owls and vintage ornaments. Using the latest digital technologies, find yourself inside ten multimedia poems about family, childhood and that feeling of home. Available on iBooks, Kindle and Kobo.



For more books visit [www.lovethepeopleyoumeet.com/books](http://www.lovethepeopleyoumeet.com/books)





Thank you for reading my poems and supporting my work. Giving is something we can all do in our own way, I appreciate your responding to mine.



# GIRRIGUN

The Girrigun National Park is part of the traditional lands of the Warungnu Aboriginal people.

source: <http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/blencoe-falls/index.html>

Girringun is the name of the ancestral creator of the Warangnu, Jirrbal, Warrgamay and Girramay people. This ancestral creator is responsible for the marriage and hunting lore.

source: <http://www.oric.gov.au/publications/spotlight/girringun-aboriginal-corporation>

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## Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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**Index**

Find Term

# HAIKU

Haiku is a little poem of three lines. The popular English form of haiku (which i use in my poems) is structured as follows:-

line 1 (5 syllables)

line 2 (7 syllables)

line 3 (5 syllables)

Traditional Japanese haiku focus on nature and the senses.

learn more: <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/haiku-poetic-form>

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## Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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**Index**

Find Term

# KWIAMBAL

Kwiambal takes its name from the aboriginal people of the Ashford district. Rich in food, water and materials, the area provided a year-round living environment for their ancestors, with sacred sites and hunting grounds. The Lemon Tree Flats is located among these traditional lands.

Kwiambal National Park contains 15 per cent of the native dry rainforest left in NSW. The vegetation is dominated by white cypress pines, silver-leaved ironbarks, and tumbledown gums.

source: <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/kwiambal-national-park/Learn-More#D30B67B525D243BF9EC6467E47999B7A>

Kwiambal is a language dialect.

source: <http://dei.eduone.net.au/ashford/DEPASCSTORIES/AboriginalHistory.pdf>

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## Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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**Index**

Find Term

# NGANYAYWANA

The name **Nganyaywana** is used for the language spoken by the Anaiwan peoples. (Reference from a NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services interpretative at the Mount Yarrowyck Nature Reserve).

**Mount Yarrowyck Nature Reserve** protects an Aboriginal cave painting site and much of the natural environment of Mount Yarrowyck. The reserve's Aboriginal cultural walk, a three kilometre return track, will take you along the granite slopes of the mountain to the cave painting site.

source: [www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/Mount-Yarrowyck-Nature-Reserve](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/Mount-Yarrowyck-Nature-Reserve)

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## Related Glossary Terms

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**Index**

Find Term

# UNDARA

'Undara' is an Aboriginal word meaning 'long way'.

The Undara Volcanic National Park protects one of the longest lava tube cave systems in the world. About 190,000 years ago, a large volcano erupted violently, spewing molten lava over the surrounding landscape. The lava flowed rapidly down a dry riverbed. The top, outer-layer cooled and formed a crust, while the molten lava below drained outwards, leaving behind a series of hollow tubes.

Semi-evergreen vine thicket grows in the moist, sheltered entrances to some of the lava caves. The roofs of some tubes collapsed, creating ideal conditions for dry rainforest to grow and wildlife to shelter. Rock-wallabies, insectivorous bat colonies and owls roost here in the cool. Birds shelter in the fruit-filled canopy and predators lurk in the tumbled basalt terrain to complete the food chain.

Undara Volcanic National Park, and much of the Etheridge Shire, is regarded as the traditional country of the Ewamian (pronounced yur-amin) Aboriginal people. The ancestors of present-day Ewamian people were born, lived and hunted in this area before the arrival of Europeans.

Source: <http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/undara-volcanic/about.html>

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## Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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**Index**

Find Term