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CULTURE REVIEW

Avowal

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i.

At the Beginning We make all in forms and systems of balance.

We spend careful time that all things fit.

All is meant. All is sense.

We leave signs on the Worlds that We are always here.

We leave the Worlds as signs We are always here.

And there. And then. And now.

In Time. As Time.

We are not here. Then there. Or then. Or now.

We move back-towards-still to come.

Fluid-solid-flowing-still.

Not moving just in seams. Or lines. Or circles.

But as well in shapes. Through shades. Of shadows.

As things. As no-things. As more-than-things.

Only in purpose.

Only when needed.

Never more. Never less.

All in forms and systems of balance.

We make marks. We make Places,

We make symbols; We make signs.

*All is Knowledge; All is Knowledgeable; All is Knowing.
All in forms and systems of balance.*

*We have made Custodians of all in forms and systems of balance.
We have left rules and obligations
Across-within-of-through the whole of Our Worlds.
They are stored in Country, of Country, as Country: the vast Keeper and Knower.
They are shared in stories. They are shown in action. They remain in custom.
They are Ourselves
Left here so Country comes into Being.
At once We are here/not here
Present away. Parts and wholes.
All in forms and systems of balance.*

*We reveal as is meant.
We send as is reason.
We touch as is object.
We whisper as is point.
We will call over space. Through time. Into present. Across beyond.
All structures and solids and vapours are equal.
It is strong. It is planned. It is careful.*

*We are Being.
We are Knowing.
We are Doing.
We are Ways:
We are Truth.
We are Ours.
We are We.*

ii.

*They all reckon I'm dead.
S'pose it looks like it.
Them fullubs, they never give a fuck when they seen me on the floor. They only lookin' through the
bars and thought I'm havin' a nap, tribal way.
Yair. It's normal for us to sleep in blood, hey. We're too deadly at massacres.
I'm there swingin' from the dunny pipe. Like a rotten banana shit-scared of the ground. Then the
bastard belt gives up. And I smash me head into the concrete.
Jeez it hurt.
I was bugged after that. Bugged right up.
A lot of us mob went that way. True.*

Just sick of shit.

Fucken sick of all the shit no way in or out.

Suddenly these fancy gubbas come along and done some n-choir-ree. On account of too many, so it looked bad. Arxin' who, what, where. Collectin' us for years and pokin' round. Their eyes and pens in every hole. Makin' new gaps that weren't never there before.

Then they come up with all these big fat wads of paper.

Findings. That's what they call 'em. They say, 'We find it shame'.

Yair. Us too. Fucken shame.

Big stain on history. What-a-fucken-shame.

And a waste. Yair. True.

I arx this mob here. I say, 'Hey, you think it's a fucken shame, a fucken waste? Or a fucken shame of waste?'

They say 'All three fucken both, ya stupid cunt.'

Yair – they swear a lot. I say, 'Look out, you filthy fucken savages. You better shoosh! They lock you up for that.' And then we raaaaaw with laugh!

Laugh and swear. And die dead like squashed maggots.

Nothin' done for looong time.

I overhear one time there's this asshole says we made it up. Not true, he reckons.

He says he can prove it.

I say, 'Prove the Old Ones wasn't butchered, ya prick.

They here with me. True.'

Just coz you can't see us, don't mean we gone, hey.

iii.

The interior appears to be a foyer area. One woman (ELDER) stands beside a scarred tree perched on display like an amputated relic. Alone and out of context. A small group of school CHILDREN surround the exhibit, as the ELDER speaks.

[lights on]

ELDER: They call her scarred tree. She give us *coolamon* from her belly and we are careful not to hurt. She nurture us. We carry our babies in her. And our food. And mix things. Not at same time, no!

[CHILDREN giggle]

ELDER: See this here?

[Elder points to the middle of the scar and tenderly traces its shape]

ELDER: They call this *dry face*. Yeah, dry face, that's right. Run out of cry for Country and all rot from not belonging no more. She sad. Sad spirit and missing kin.

[CHILDREN are wide-eyed. Behind them, three men in business suits have sidled up and pose like tourists, viewing wonder. ELDER stares at them].

ELDER: You mob there, you boss ones. This another one you steal. Scars not here but on Country you take. You leave selfish slits full of stupid things.

[CHILDREN turn to look at three men, who by now are pinched and defensive. All is silent]

[ELDER pauses. Then turns attention to the scarred tree and CHILDREN follow her gaze.

ELDER slowly speaks]

ELDER: This our GRANDMOTHER. You need to Bring her Home.

[fade]

iv.

This is Our testimony.

As Witness We see

Wounding and wounds

Hurting and hurt.

Not as We meant.

Not as We balanced.

We remember.

They forget.

We still Know.

They know better.

We keep sharing.

They divide.

The message stick warns of

Future's Sorry Business.

Sadly. Sadly.

Country

Cannot breathe.