

# Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language

---

Volume 3  
Issue 2 *Hydrobotanica*

Article 14

---

2013

## Rocky Bay (Kairp Ngungar)

Nandi Chinna  
*Edith Cowan University*

---

### Recommended Citation

Chinna, N. (2009). Rocky Bay (Kairp Ngungar). *Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language*, 3(2).  
Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/landscapes/vol3/iss2/14>

This Poetry is posted at Research Online.  
<http://ro.ecu.edu.au/landscapes/vol3/iss2/14>

## Rocky Bay (Kairp Ngungar) *by Nandi Chinna*

I've often wanted to sleep in the cave myself  
but every time I have come here there is already  
a crumpled blanket, a pair of shoes, and some trousers  
hanging on the rocks to dry. Today is no exception,  
two Noongar boys are riding their bikes  
around and around the limestone column  
that holds up the roof of the cave  
their tracks like thin snakes crisscrossing  
entwining, carving the sand into fish bones.

The ashes of old fires lie metres deep,  
black smoke murals depict the night  
a serpent camped here,  
exhausted after creating the whole river  
and then having to fight  
to keep the land the river passed through.

Curled up around that central pillar,  
who knows how long he slept, regaining his strength,  
peaceful in his victory, dreaming up the prawns  
the crabs, the particular fishes,  
humming in his sleep, the melodies of songs  
about women and kids wading in the river  
driving fish into the bay, where they are caught  
by men waiting with spears.

Did he dream up the newcomers, burning lime,  
scarring the walls, blasting holes in the ceiling,  
a drain cut through the rock below  
still sticky from the effluent of the soap factory  
when the cove is called jokingly Soapy Bay?

All we know is that the big snake did move on,  
tonight someone else will sleep here  
curled up in blankets, the dark river  
winding westwards, the ocean in the distance  
infiltrating their somnolence  
with a barely perceptible hiss.

*NB: this poem won the Mosman Park Literature award 2009.*

The International Centre for Landscape and Language  
Edith Cowan University  
*Landscapes* ISSN 1448-0778

Nandi Chinna completed her Master of Arts at ECU in 2008, for which she researched and wrote a poetry collection based on the history of place names in Perth, Western Australia. She is currently a PhD candidate at ECU, researching the history of Perth's wetlands past and present. She is using the methodology of psychogeography to create a collection of poems about wetlands and walking.