

12 Queens Road,  
HURSTVILLE. N.S.W.  
27th June, 1961.

Dear Mrs Armstrong,

Herewith is the promised poem, "The Wollundry Lagoon" by Mary Gilmore. You will notice a few errors in alignment towards the end of the poem. They are my errors, so you will know if you are printing this.

In "The Tilted Cart" are a number of "Wagga" poems. "The Song of the Waler", "The Brucedale Scandal", "Old Sam Stinson's Shepherd" (In the book, it is "Anthony Stinson", but Dame Mary altered it for Mrs Geoff Quonoey of Wagga, to "Sam Stinson").

"In Wagga Wagga, Long Ago", "In Wesleyan Days, Wagga Wagga", "Bells and Bullocks",

Other poems in "The Tilted Cart" apply to Wagga as they do to other country districts, during the days of the bullock teams.

Hoping these little bits of information will be of some use to you,

Yours sincerely,

*Sheila Tearle*  
(Mrs) Sheila Tearle.

There came a cry from far away,  
And then a shadow crossed the moon;  
There was a movement scarcely seen,  
Swift turning towards the dark lagoon.

And like a kite that sloping fell,  
And like a bolt in swift release,  
The black duck, with his whistling wing,  
Dropped by a trail of midget geese. (1)

Once nested there the pelican,  
And there the swan sailed stately by;  
By day the ibis stalked, and night  
Was startled by the curlew's cry.

There slashed the whipping plover's wing,  
And there the mopoke haunted low,  
At dawn the sauntering emu stooped,  
And drank unhindered long ago.

And when the river floods were out,  
And when within the waters leapt  
The great fish shining in the moon,  
There came the tribes, and Bora kept.

And once again I see the fires  
Flicker and flame upon the night,  
The shadows darkling on the trees,  
The bodies gleaming in the light!

And I remember how, a child,  
I trembling caught my father's hand,  
Hearing the massed bull-roarers roll  
Traditioned runes across the land.

Mighty the rote, now swift, now slow;  
Now high, now deep; now with a sound  
Like all the winds upon the earth,  
Drawn in and held in one great round.

And there each day the hunters came,  
Home with the chase upon the back;  
Youths whom the elders sent abroad,  
To prove their skill by craft and track.

And oft I stood while swimmers slipt  
Beneath the lines of duck and teal,  
Or noosed the swan, or slid beneath  
The pelican's slow paddling heel!

And there I saw the spearman stand  
So still his shadow, ~~that was at the fly~~  
The stiller seemed where it would lie!

Where, long ago, the kangaroo  
Loped to the water's edge to drink,  
A wall of willows later stood,  
Root-fasted on the townward brink.

Yet there I heard the lubra's hail  
(So wide, so still the aery space)  
Float like a petal dropped from sound,  
Me~~ward~~ward soft falling from its place.

2.

And there I saw the stars within  
The waters lace like like golden bees,  
Or watched, enchanted, as the moon  
Rose like a shield amid the trees.

And I remember how, a child,  
I felt the glamour there unfold  
Even the huge black logs the floods  
Swung out, where swift the currents rolled.

O lovely, lovely were the curves  
Wherever birds arched neck and drank,  
And lovely was the arrowy track,  
Where swan and duck sailed, rank on rank;

And lovely, lovely as he stood,  
And lovely as he stooping bent,  
The kangaroo, that, dainty-lipped,  
Sipped of the waters ere he went.

But memory dies with those who go,  
And I am lonely in a vast,  
Where, in their myriads, went the slain,  
Spoke in full panoply the past;

Yet it may be, the old lagoon  
Remembers those who came; and keeps,  
Within its deeper depths, the watch,  
Where their lost history buried sleeps.

1. The teal is the midget goose.