

# Witongga

*Blank verse. Alternating dactylic pentameters and tetrameters (terminating trochee each line)*

## *Prologue*

*I was born at Henley Beach on the shores of Gulf St Vincent. I grew up in Fulham in the western suburbs of Adelaide.*

*I was born on the foreshore of Wonggayerlo (Western Sea) on the edge of Witongga (the 'Reed Beds'). I grew up in Witongga, in the land of the Kurna people.*

*I am not a Kurna man, but I am a Witongga man.*

Dawn. An unkindness of ravens disrupts the still silence,  
Corvus mellori conducting the roll call.  
Black birds whose feathers give wedge tails, and chest ruffs, and hackles.  
Ravens, not crows. We're in land of the Kurna.

River of Red Gum Tree flows from the Hills to Witongga,  
When enough water enables the passage!  
Dunes of sand block a flood's outflow to Western Sea waters.  
Wetland, the Reed Beds, the place called Witongga.

Kurna meyunna can feast on creation's vast plenty,  
Waterfowl, yabbies, and mussels – even tadpoles!  
Vegetables, fruit, and small animals. Prized food, the snakes here.  
Old people sleep in the dunes along Wonggayerlo.

Summer, some two hundred years before writing this poem.  
Dawn. The unkindness of ravens is silent.  
Ravens report a strange sailing ship seen in the West Sea.  
Whole way of life swept away by the white folk.

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