

By Creek and by Track

You be the judge of what's right and what's wrong
For these are the words of my Nullica song
That flows from my memory, to paper and pen,
From a place far away and way back when.
Like a tap that is opened the memories flood back
And I'm treading old trails by creek and by track,
Till I come to a coupe from the forested side
With my old mate Bilbo, who acts as a guide
To a new group of greenies bound for the sky,
To challenge the loggers and never say die.
Then back to the camp to train even more
Recruits for the trees in this ongoing war
To stop this forest being carted away,
For there's one more battle to fight every day
By the feral arboreals of Nullica times,
Putting end to the forest destructor's crimes.

Nowhere to Run

I could fly way back in the old days
When I followed the forest's wild ways
And the tracks on her leafy floor;
I walked through a magical door.
I was following ancient Gaia's path
Far from home and far from hearth
To a land that is always free,
A place where I long to be:
To feel beneath my feet her soils
And the dangerous serpent lies in coils,
For that which can heal can kill
If the earth we do any ill.
But still the forests fall to the saw
And the planet cannot take much more,
For the harm that is being done
Will leave us with nowhere to run.

Life's Stillness

It feels, at times, I lose touch with life's stillness.
Living in the city, a world full of stresses,
There is no stillness; that peaceful inner ease:
The gentle movements of slow, swaying trees,
The roar of rapids, the flow of the creek,
The trilling at night when crickets speak,
A breeze on the face like a soothing kiss,
A boiling billy's familiar hiss,
The crunching of snow underneath my feet,
The love of the world that makes my heart beat.
It is life's simple rhythms that keep me whole,
The music that plays in the depth of my soul.

The busyness of business in the city today
Makes life's simplicity seem an alien,
A cacophony of sound and unceasing light
Denies us the peace and quiet of the night,
The industrial world's discordant sound
Bays at my spirit like a rabid hound.
Where can we hide from the crippling fears
While life and death do battle through the years?
The forest, the sea, the sky and the land,
The wind reaching out it's welcoming hand
To embrace the earth, our ultimate answer
To the meaningless sprawl; our society's cancer.

The Arrival of Our Bilbo

"I reckon I can," said the bloke with the mischievous grin.
It hardly seemed likely, but if you don't try you can't win.
The arrow was lost and the platforms had nowhere to go,
So he fastened the line to a rock and he gave it a throw.
Then the rock left the hand of our friend the mysterious gnome
(If he failed we'd have nothing to do but pack up, and go home).
Many hours later; the platforms secured in their trees,
We marveled at how he let fly with that rock with such ease:
This strange bearded gnome, with his quiet and casual calm;
Those platforms were up on the strength of his powerful arm.
Then we looked at his toes, being hairy, as ever you'd meet:
"Good heavens," said Karen, "I've read about you and you're feet,
It's the gallant Sir Bilbo who's come to the forest to play!"
And we couldn't deny it - Sir Bilbo took a bow that day.



The Rigger's Lament

This grotty little man came up from the south,
This narky little man with a bloody foul mouth,
This grotty little man claimed he knew the way,
This narky little man said he'd save the day,
This grotty little man hanging platforms high,
This narky little man who reached for the sky,
This grotty little man talked a whole lot of shit,
This narky little man was on top of it,
This grotty little man pulled the whole thing off,
This narky little man who thought he was a toff.

I knew not what I did, but I did it anyway,
I knew not what I did, but it worked OK,
I knew not what I did, up there in the trees,
I knew not what I did, but I did it with ease,
I knew not what I did as I hung them high,
I knew not what I did when I learned to fly,
I knew not what I did, but I got them there,
I knew not what I did, though I did it with flair,
I knew not what I did, but I'm here to tell
We knew not what we did, but by god we did it well!

Learning to Fly

Like a fledgling bird that spreads its wings,
Then opens its beak and proudly sings,
The steps that begin the journeys we make
Give rise to the memories that lie in our wake.
I believe I'm capable of anything at all,
But how can I fly if I'm scared to crawl
I have to be strong; I have to be proud
And declare my powers, strong and loud.
The choice is clear: stand up tall
And don't be crippled by the fear of a fall.



The Crew

Col was the quiet and serious man,
Something of the patriarch to our clan.
Gregg was energy itself afire,
Wild like a flame blown higher and higher.
Bob sits still by the campfire light,
When Bob is around you know everything's right,
But the ground crew captain is ever stout,
Bilbo's his name, and "Well-come!" he'll shout.,
For the tree sitters know the crew will be there
To feed them the morsels they can spare.
Of the sitters three, Emily's the queen
On her treetop throne, calm and serene,
And Karen, whose laughter infects us all,
There's wonder and joy in her impish call.
And finally, The Rigger, who tied it all up,
Eternally grateful to drink from the cup
Of life with these stalwarts, through and through;
No finer friends had the forest than you.

A Casual Conservation

“Hey you, greenie, high up in the tree
Won’t you come down and talk with me?”
“Not I!” said the greenie, “I do know the score
And it would be a crime to comply with the law:
I know my own mind, and I know that for sure
I’d rather be here than behind a cell door.
I know it’s your job to open the way
So the loggers can come and start earning their pay,
So I’ll stay up here on my platform high
So they can’t cut this forest and make it die.
If I have to I’ll stay for a year and a day,
Or as long as it takes for the government to say
That the forest can stand, so the trees can live:
What greater gift could the government give
To the forest, the country, our planet as a whole?
So I’ll sit in this tree till I reach that goal.
So be gone now officer, you will do no good,
Take my advice, you really should,
You’ll never sway me from this everlasting fight
Or cart me off to jail with your violence and might.
You could drag me from here to suffer in your cell
Thinking you are doing your job very well,
But is doing your job really all that matters
When the heart of the earth is being torn to tatters?
The friends of the earth are friends in its need,

Don't obey the masters of corporate greed."
"Stay there if you must," the policeman said at last,
"I hear what you say, that the planet's dying fast,
But you have to understand that arrest you I must
Your faith is in the earth, but in laws I trust
At the end of the day I will lock you up in gaol,
It's not that I personally want your cause to fail,
Though your actions break the letter of the law
They uphold the common duty all the more,
More power to you friend, in your tree sit high;
Your feet aren't on the ground, but your heart is in the sky."

Then he left me sitting in the branches of my tree
And I wondered, were we pawns of a common enemy?

Attack of the Blue Fairies

They sprung one on us: a sudden attack
Of fairies in blue, all over the track.
The elves disappeared like the melting of ice,
It was no place to be - blue fairies aren't nice.
But Bilbo the stubborn, the loyal, the strong
Ran for his pack, but it took him too long.
A shout rang out: "Run, Bilbo, run!"
But they had him surrounded, and Bilbo was done.
'Twas a sudden surprise the high heroes did see:
Now they were alone, the arboreal three.
But we knew he'd be spared, for we well understood
That elves are too lean, and don't taste any good.



Nullica's Way

From high in my treetop I laugh as beneath me they run,
The TRG's* coming, it's time once again for some fun.
The elves have hotfooted-it, back to the shadows of trees
While the TRG toughs on the ground are swarming like bees.
Their uniforms popping with muscle, they're ever so tough
But when faced with our Nullica elves muscles won't be enough.
For there's laughter as Gregg like a dart dashes out to the fray,
The grin on his face plainly shows they have made it his day:
He will spin and he'll cartwheel and somersault over the ground
Then he'll run them all ragged and hide where he cannot be found.
And then he'll appear from the blue in the bounds of the mill
To monkey his way up the gantry with consummate skill,
Enticing them on to the chase with his daring and guile
He'll leap with a telemark landing upon the chip pile.
Their bluenesses learn they must drink from the bitterest cup –
When Gregg's at full bore I'm afraid they just cannot keep up.
They sweat and they swear but to Gregg this is nothing but play,
For you can't catch the likes of an elf who knows Nullica's way.

**New South Wales Police Tactical Response Group*

When Fairies Meet Their Rainbows

It started with Col on the ABC one day,
When he opened his mouth and happened to say
That we called them 'blue fairies'; the TRG tough;
For fragile male egos that was more than enough.
They had to do something; they really were mad;
We didn't know what, but we knew something bad,
'Cos you can't call them names like 'fairies in blue'
Unless pissing them off is what you would do.
So we packed up the Rainbows, scarves all a-waving,
And told them the tree sitters needed saving,
They tripped down the road in a jubilant throng,
Singing and smiling and sauntering along.
Then the TRG toughs, in their camouflage gear,
Pounced on the Rainbows, who trembled in fear,
So with rainbow scarves and banners and more
CLANG went the sound of the lock up door.
But Bilbo escaped like a thief in the night,
He'd sniffed at the air and it didn't smell right,
He'd moved to the back when he smelt 'the blue' near
So when the 'Fairies' pounced he was well in the clear,
Away down the gully, beyond a little brook,
Away down the path that the greenies took.
Now the cops held the ground and they aimed to squeeze
The arboreal protesters out of the trees;

So another day dawned on the treetops high
And the tree sitters awoke to a clear morning sky,
While in Eden's cold cells with a grunt and a clang
The Rainbows were thrown where they joyously sang
*"All the way with NVA, it's the only way to go,
All the way with NVA, Rob Burrows told us so."*
And they sang and chanted this very strange line,
Ending with a '*whoosh*', which they thought was very fine.
And as the fairies in blue bellied up to the bar
It was business as usual in the treetops afar.



The Elves Won't Sleep Tonight

In the forest, the mighty forest,
The elves, they slept last night.
Disturb the forest, the sacred forest,
And the elves will show their might.

Beneath the sitters, on quiet platforms,
The elves, they slept last night.
Disturb the sitters, the peaceful sitters
And get ready for a fight.

Go home blue fairies, there's fear blue fairies
For you woke them up tonight,
You disturbed the sitters and now the elves
Will put you all to flight.

A Dance Along Gree Road

Well, all the cracks had gathered at that coupe called 702*;
They were torturing the sitters - and with disco music too!
The treetops lit with strobe lights, it was our direst fear,
If we didn't make a stand right then the sitters' ends were near.
So all the cracks had gathered for that dance along Gree Road,
For everyone turned up to help with shouldering the load.
The music drove a frenzied beat, a wild metallic sound,
We came to turn the disco off - and rock and roll around.
We set about to show the cops some steps they'd never seen;
We taught them there and then just how to wish they'd
never been.
We sent them limping home that night; their sorry heads
hung low,
They knew we meant it when we said that disco had to go.
Remember, if you mess with us, then we might just respond
And kick your little arses to a place that's far beyond.

**Coupe 702, Nullica State Forest*

All the Cracks

The arboreal sitters were in need,
So a party was held to get them a feed.
The best were there to dance that night,
To put it to the cops, all right.

The lines were drawn by the law, our foe,
Who came to the coupe but wouldn't go.
A war was brought a war against our kind
By an enemy, evil to the mind.

So all the cracks had gathered round
To fight for every inch of ground,
Col said, "We will not wear the yoke."
"For justice!" cried the other folk.

Their purpose was to try to ease
The pain of those up in the trees.
How could the cops not see the rage?
Oh, things had reached a sorry stage.

Their acts were all too plain and clear,
Blatantly inflicting fear.
We had no choice, no other way,
It could not go another day.

For justice had to win again
And put an end to all the pain.
That night we took them by surprise,
For Mother Earth - no compromise.

To think that we would bend the knee,
Surrendering our sacred tree
To some pathetic strutting boy
Who thinks he knows a clever ploy.

“We don’t take threats from bantam fools,”
Said Bilbo, “Here, we write the rules,
The power the bullies think they own
Is anything but set in stone.”

We stormed the coupe; we heard a shout,
For Gregg was letting it all hang out,
The sitters dropped their hauling ropes,
The coppers cut them (with our hopes).

I grabbed a rope with both my fists,
Then saw the handcuffs on my wrists.
Though the cops were in a filthy mood,
Somehow we got the sitters food.

So hear this statement loud and clear –
We will not succumb to fear,
We’ll send you home, your heads hung low,
For this you surely have to know:

We’re here for friends as well as trees,
Don’t try to bring us to our knees,
For if we’re backed against the wall
We just might pay another call.

Confusion to the Enemy *

Confusion to the enemy, whoever they might be,
'Cos if there is confusion then perhaps I can be free,
Free to walk the journey that my spirit so desires
And stack the world's bureaucracies on top of funeral pyres,
And burn the bloody lot of them to ashes pure and grey,
And thereby let another phoenix rise to meet the day.
For great big towers of bullshit these bureaucracies have piled
Until they've ruined everything that once was free and wild,
For freedom's just another word that's written every day
On useless bits of paper they keep shoving in our way:
It's meaning and its message buried underneath the crap,
Devoid of any moral, it becomes a spirit trap.
So confusion to the enemy: bureaucracies must die
So we can all breathe easily beneath the clear blue sky.



* This is a term used during WWII

Exercising the Law

Dancing greenie, running cop,
Panting, pleading, shouting "Stop!"
The forest that the greenies know
Isn't a place that cops should go,
For greenies never compromise
When giving them some exercise.
Stumbling, tripping, puffing, panting
Behind some greenie wildly chanting,
Skipping through he forest clear,
Not too fast - you want him near,
Otherwise you'll lose the fun
Of taking coppers for a run.

Conversation with a Tree

"Well met," said one who was all wise,
Who'd seen the years without surprise.
"I'm of the forest, wild and free,
How nature intended it to be.
The night sky in its starry glory
Alone has witnessed my life's story.
Born right here upon this place,
Years before your puny race
Came from far across the sea
To the land of the Aborigine.
I've stood here since, until this day,
Now those who know say I can't stay,
I block the path to their desire,
They'll kill me soon with sword and fire.
They come here now with tools to kill,
For I can hear the chainsaw shrill.
Soon I'll be gone, the oldest here,
Torn from the home I hold so dear."
Then louder roared the deafening scream,
I wished it were a frightful dream,
But dead she lay on churned up sod,
She died where she was put by God:
The beauty of that mighty tree
Destroyed by greed, so utterly,
Now lying there all torn and hewn,
Dead and broken branches strewn
Far across the forest floor:

A living thing that lives no more.
A sea of stumps, her former home
Destroyed by teeth of steel and chrome,
This once great forest giant lay
A victim of a war today.
I saw her carted to the mill –
I hate that place, and always will.



Cathartic Rhythms

A cathartic rhythm washes over my soul,
In the mosaic of the forest I'm a segment of the whole.
Far from the city's furor, I find my inner calm
Soothing the demons in my mind with nature's balm.
I stand beneath a waterfall; a cacophony of sound,
The torrent on my body is an ecstasy unbound,
Rippling through my body, through the forest and the glade,
I know my soul is meant for this; the reason I was made.
It's as though a spirit lifts me up, a pinpoint in the sky,
My heart unfolds its fledgling wings and learns that it can fly.
Such things, and more, are nature's gifts, far from city lights
Where I can gaze in awe upon the wondrous starry nights
That glorify the skies where it is clear enough to see:
In the wilderness where my spirit loves to wander, wild and free.