

What footprints lie beneath?



This land of chequered history; criss-crossed by paths of time.
Colonial incursion, dispossession: Such a crime.
The tracks of people of the land, spiritually their place,
Trampled by people on the land, careless in their haste.
Explorers “discovering” land where First Nations peoples roam:
Settlers taking ownership of someone else’s home.

We’re obliged as people of this land, without regard to race
To respect each other’s culture and revere a sense of place.
Centuries of people have walked this timeless land,
Thirst quenched from common waterways; its harshness felt firsthand.
When we recognise our differences: discuss them face-to-face,
We will become one people; belong to the same place.

Reimagining North Queensland and its history up to here,
As a colonial terra nullius; white vessels filled with air.
Then the jugs are shattered, all flawed systems fall apart,
Slow reconciliation; thin black joints begin to start.
Sparse lines and missing pieces show how fragile is this base;
The bond uniting cultures and imagining of place.

The paths of modern travellers are often sealed with tar.
Most will go by boat or train or aeroplane or car.
Venture off the well-worn paths; be excited and alive.
Walk where those who roamed this place, struggled to survive.
When you’re standing on North Queensland tracks, what do they bequeath?
Think of those who crossed this place. What footprints lie beneath?

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