

Eric Bogle

"SOMETHING OF VALUE"

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-Eric Bogle

I can see the Southern Cross tonight
While here below, bathed in it's light
The Dreamtime land safe, snug and tight is sleeping
Wrapped in complacency and contentedness
No discordant sounds disturb our rest
While the gentle souls we've dispossessed are weeping

We took it all by the gun and the sword
By the right of our race and in the name of our God
Though as outcasts ourselves, transported,
condemned
None knew better than we the injustice of men

We took it all in our hunger and need
Enslaved by our past and consumed by our greed
And left them to beg for the scraps at our door
While we called them drunkards and wasters and
whores
They've been drowning, drowning in their tears
for the last two hundred years

From England's New Jerusalem
to the Dreamtime land the tall ships came
with human cattle in convict chains to bind them
In the grim fight just to stay alive
Dreams must struggle to survive
Few could see the glitt'ring prize before them

We had it all in the palm of our hand
A new hope, a new dream, a new life, a new land
One last chance to break from the chains of the past
To build something of value, build something to last

This ancient land was a vast empty page
Waiting for the great writers of a brand new age
The future was ours to protect or profane
A paradise lost, a paradise gained
Now tell me, is paradise here,
after two hundred years?

So now, beneath the Southern Cross
it's time to tally up the cost
of what we've gained and what we've lost forever
Though much has gone we can't replace
Those of us who love this place
Together now, must turn and face the future

So here's to us all, we're frail humankind
who wander through life mostly helpless and blind
To our courage and cowardice, our humor and pain
Our hundred steps forward, ninety-nine back again

Yes here's to us all, the wise and the fools
The indifferent, the caring, the kind and the cruel
As we march to the beat of an uncertain drum
Stumbling towards what we may yet become
Towards the brave new frontiers,
of the next two hundred years

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