

Bogle Eric

"Two Strong Arms"

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Two Strong Arms
-Eric Bogle

In the still heat of the afternoon
Kritos was laid to rest
in the dry and dusty red soil of Australia
As the Mulberry and Cypress bloomed
beneath the mountain crests
so far away in Macedonia

The children of his heart
and the children of his blood
In sorrow and in silence
and in pride, around him stood
All his sons and daughters with
their daughters and their sons,
The Family of the man with two strong arms

Born a peasant's son on a mountain farm
where a thin and grudging earth
made hunger a gray ghost at every meal
where life was just a grinding stone
of poverty and death
that crushed young and old alike
beneath the wheel

So before the wheel could turn
with his family and his wife
Kristos came down from the mountains
searching for a better life
Bringing only hopes and dreams with him
to the distant southern land
And a brave and willing heart,
and two strong arms

In a West Australian country town
Kristos found a job
for men willing to work hard
and bend their backs
Cutting the lofty gum trees down,
clearing brush and scrub
Where speaking English mattered less

than a good sharp axe
Driven by his dreams
as the hard years came and went
Kristos bent his back to every
daylight hour that got sent
How many golden wheat fields grow?
how many western farms?
The rich harvest of the man
with two strong arms

He worked to keep his family fed and clothed
to give his kids the chance
for them to try and be all they could be
So that unlike him they'd never know
the chains of ignorance
or taste the bitter bread of poverty

He wanted them to have
all the things he'd never had
And if all that took was blood and sweat
He'd give both and be glad
He lived to watch his children grow
and match their father's dreams
All it took was love and pride
and two strong arms

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