

# REQUIEM OF THE HUMAN SOUL

## EXCERPT: WARRIGAL KILLARA

Copyright © Jeremy R. Lent. 2009. All rights reserved.

### Warrigal Killara

“I’d now like to admit into the record the NVRX known as *Warrigal Killara*.” Harry spoke calmly and powerfully, the way someone says “checkmate” as they move their rook decisively down the chess board in a final flourish.

And just like yesterday, we’re putting on our NVRX helmets. What horrendous massacre will I see this time? But as I open my eyes inside the helmet, I realize I’m not looking around at some battlefield. Instead, it’s a bar. It’s got that smell of old booze and dirt. Of tables wiped down too many times. There are a few old geezers scattered around in small groups, chattering away. Over in the corner, some noise coming from a small black and white TV. Mid twentieth-century, I tell myself.

I realize that “I” am leaning on the bar itself. Just like yesterday, I let the NVRX thoughts wash over me. But they’re not clear and crisp like the thoughts of Reflecting Water. No. They’re vague, fuzzy, blurred. In a moment, I realize why. I’m drunk as a skunk.

“Drink to forget” I tell myself, in the form of an all-pervading thought that remains over everything, like a cloud settled as fog over the landscape.

I’m cradling a beer in my hand. “Drink and bloody forget. Forget all. Forget what them did. Them took me. Them gutted me like fish.”

In spite of the “drink and forget”, I realize I’m remembering something. From long ago.

*“Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee”*

I’m hearing the powerful sound of young voices singing in unison. A hymn. In a chapel. I’m one of them. But others are singing and I’m not. The sweet power of glorious music.

*“Take my voice, and let me sing,  
Always, only, for my King.”*

The voices keep flowing. I’m silent. I’m thinking of a little dirt yard where I used to run after the chickens before my mother would catch me and take me in.

*“Take my will, and make it Thine.  
It shall be no longer mine.”*

Ow! My thigh jolts with pain. I’ve been hit with the bat. From the Super. Him balding and crusty. He got that mean expression that most wonks have. Hard, cold mask of a face.

*“Sing along, Luke! Sing along!”*

That’s what they call me here. Luke. But Luke’s not real name. Real name is Warrigal Killara. Means something. Not like Luke.

The memory blurs and re-forms. Now, I’m walking behind the schoolyard, talking to my friends in Warlpiri. Having fun.

*“Luke, come here!”* It’s the Super again.

*“Wassup, Mr. Worthington?”*

*“How many times have I told you – don’t speak in your native language! It’s obscene. Disgraceful. Why have we spent all this time teaching you a civilized language, for you to waste our good charity with this filth!”*

I’m getting my mouth washed out with soap. It tastes so awful... I’m gagging. Almost throwing up. The taste stays with me for days. It tastes like English. Like the Captain Cooks.

And I'm back in the bar. Holding a new can of grog. Gulp down in one go. Head fuzzier still.

Remembering again. Remembering. Night time. Cicadas chirping. Called to Mr. Worthington's room. No-one around. Punishment. Hit on the bum. Stinging. Stinging. Mr. Worthington's trousers down. His cock big and hard. He pulls my face to his hard cock. Smell of old sweat on his balls.

"Now you do a good job or I'll never leave you alone, you worthless half-breed."

I do good job. His spunk fills my mouth.

"Now you swallow it. Do you hear? Every last drop."

And again. And again.

I'm holding another bottle. Drink to forget. Nearly there. Nearly falling down. But the remembering starts again.

I'm eight years old. It's my birthday today. I'm playing with my little brother and two little sisters in the yard. Momma looking over us. Trying to catch the chickens. I got my present today. A cricket bat. I'm going to be a great cricket player one day. I'm holding cricket bat with one hand and catching chickens with other.

Two Captain Cooks turn up in motor car. One of them's Mr. Worthington but I don't know it then.

"There he is!" cries Mr. Worthington.

I'm grabbed by them.

"He's the half-caste! He's the one we can civilize!"

My momma screaming. Fighting the Captain Cooks. Little brother and sisters hitting them. Them carry me, kicking and punching, to the motor car. Smells of leather and cigar smoke. Never smelled that before.

Momma hitting the car window.

“They’re always like that,” Mr. Worthington says to the other wonk. “But they soon forget their offspring and turn their attention to their other abo pups.”

All I can think about is my cricket bat. It fell on the ground. I want my cricket bat.

Momma yells through the window:

“Never forget your name, Warrigal Killara. Never forget who you are.”

Another grog. I feel myself slipping from the stool. Warrigal Killara. *Wild One Forever*. Pissed forever.

I take off my helmet. I feel sick. Sick to my stomach. Sick in my soul. Silence fills the room. Broken by the calm, victorious voice of Harry Shields.

“Once again, Counsel Aramovich, I fail to understand how you can use any argument in defense of the Primals that relates to the specialness of their soul. I think we’ve established beyond a reasonable doubt that the Primals themselves had already done a magnificent job of eliminating anything special and sacred from those ethnic groups around the world that had maintained a link to the early forms of human consciousness.”

Naomi made her usual arguments. But I was too wasted and demoralized to listen. I was disgusted. I couldn’t stand this much longer – watching Harry Shields take everything sacred to me, eviscerate it and then use it to his ends; take everything horrific about our history and then manipulate it to argue his case. I wanted out.

## REQUIEM OF THE HUMAN SOUL

### EXCERPT: WARRIGAL KILLARA

Copyright © Jeremy R. Lent. 2009. All rights reserved.