

THE UNDEAD SWAGGIE

Doc Derek Bland 2018

Out on the farm just yesterday, it was a fierce midsummer's day
I'm up since sparrer's trying to round the mob up for the sales
The dogs were hot and fractious and the mob was uncooperative So I'd
had quite enough when they was safe behind the rails.

The long day's work behind me now, I'm leaning on the paddock gate, And
watching as the red sun sets behind the old gum tree. I hear the furious
sound of pounding hooves upon the old north road And then, down come
the troopers - one, two, three.

The sergeant, he's a burly bloke, red-faced and sweating from the ride.
He jumps down from his mount and then he strides across to me.
Says 'Have you seen a swaggie come by this way just recently?
We need to catch him quickly and place him in custody.'

I think about it for a while then look the sergeant in the eye,
'I'm certain that no swaggie has been out this way today'
And he says 'Tell us if you see him' and I assure him, 'course I would. He
gets, back on his horse and then he makes to ride away.

Before he goes he makes it clear that I would be in jeopardy If I
should help to keep the thieving swaggie from the law. 'The blighter
stole a jumbuck, and then jumped into a billabong But now it
seems he didn't drown - to catch him I have swore'.

The three ride off in clouds of dust, and then, it seems from out the blue
A whispered voice asks, 'Matey, have those blasted troopers gone?' I
have to say, I get a shock to see there, right behind of me, A swaggie
with a tuckerbag – he's drenched through to the bone.

'They said you'd drowned yerself,' says I, 'Back down there in a billabong.'
The swaggie tells me that his ruse had paid off for a while,
'Well, I jumped in and hid' he says, 'Amid a handy bed of reeds
Then scarpered when their backs was turned – I must have run ten mile!'

Right then I see the tuckerbag is wriggling quite peculiar
'What's in the bag? I ask of him, 'It's acting kind of weird'.
The swaggie opens up his bag and peering in he looks surprised.
'I've never seen this lamb before, I swear by Joseph's beard!'

He winks and gives a friendly grin while shouldering his swag again. 'You never saw me, did yer, mate?' and starts off up the track. He's hardly gone ten paces when he slowly fades into the light, Just merging with the red sunset and never looking back.

A honking, roaring ten-ton truck awakes me from my reverie.
I realise that what I'd seen had been a fantasy -
The phantom of that swagman who's still running from the troopers three, And
waltzing his matilda throughout all eternity.

Waltzing matilda, waltzing matilda You'll
never catch me alive, said he.

