

CARNEGIE MAGIC

by Rak Razam

‘Keep your eyes on the bloody road,’ Kali chastises in a husky, bong-thick Greek contralto as the car swerves back and forth n’tonka toy tuff across the snaking metal groove move of the tramlines. She runs purple stained fingers through purple dreddlocked hair and picks out the fag end of a joint, examines it briefly with big black magpie eyes, then tosses it out the window.

‘I’m trying to, man, but the moon, the moon’s so bright, I just want to follow it...’ Coyote sings back, howling at the blood-husk white mother in the sky, hands tight on the steering wheel, eyes lost to the night, the light, the white mother in the sky night.

All so long ago now; just another evening in the new millenium and the shit was hitting the fan, man, and blood, feces, paradigms and chunks of the ceiling were all going into hyperdrive as it fell. Us? There we were hurtling down the road in the Hoonmobile, knee deep in the crud of months of fast food husks, wrapped in a haze of smoke and memories, adrenaline and THC our only friends> spill spill spilling through the streets of Carnegie, the suburb that never evolved, where it’s always 1978! Hardcore neo-tek drum n bass soundscapes boomboxing through the Hoonmobile and there we were, urban disco ferals on the road, bedspread pants wrapped like Sunday mornings around our legs, crazy clothes woven from trip-hop dreams and magic dust covering our pierced and dyed hides. The Barrellfull of Monkeys. The crew. Tripping out of our skulls and into some serious damage control of the reality grid. So long ago.

Pensioners trapped in the fashion-flesh of lost decades flashed by like pink flamingos in a garden of kitsch: pink nightgowns and slippers, yellow slacks and boob tubes, brown cardigans and bankers shirts, auburn ties, pale slacks and the Watusi, the Twist, the two World Wars. They looked like cardboard cutouts from a bygone age littering the streets with their open mouths, stare stare staring at the freak show speeding by.

‘I SAW it, guys, I can’t explain it...words don’t...they flow off it like water, but, it was HER, and she was real...real, I’m in a real bad way, ‘ I was raving from the back seat of the

Hoonmobile, freaking in and out of reality. I knew it sounded mad but what the fuck can you do, yeh? 'Just hurry up with that bloody bong, alright? I don't want to think about it, about anything...' I peeled myself off the red vinyl seat like a Banana Split shedding it's skin and leant forward, head between my knees. 'Oh man...oh...no....oh, this is a reaaaal flashback...' Outside the window a rainbow blur of two dollar shops and late night bargain hunters stalking cheap dreams.

'Oooooooooooooohh, man, I've got culture shock, really, I dunno if I can handle this right now...' I shout over the sound of the engine as inphomation fires itself at me in raw streaming footage all around, as the sick, mad, spit spit spittle and the memory and the sadness all rise hot within me again.

Next to me Phooey is shaking his long, sandy hair from side to side in a languid, stoned denial, as elongated impulses fire from his brain and metamorphasize into language, liquid language, like a magic stone, a melting disco ball straight from the Other Side. 'Nah...nah, you said it y'self, man...you can't have a flashback while you're still tripping...won't work...' His fingers fumble muppet like around the smoked plastic of the ICED-T bottle, find the hole and the bong flares to life.

'Look, you'll be okay, I promise,' Kali sings back, her voice melliferous, undulating, ping ponging ones and noughts, streaming in binary language around the insides of the car. 'But don't you **dare** flip out again, you bastard! You were catatonic - I had a finger up your nose and we shook you and everything. Christ, I was worried, Bil-E.' She leans in, Dark Mother of Destruction, demon cunt of hot night, eternal night, Kali, pretty Kali, power Kali, Kali the Destroyer, Kali above all others, and hits me hard, wakes me up, lets me know her magick. 'Next time a rip pulls you that far out you can fucking drown in it for all I care, okay?'

I close my eyes, the rainbowangelthing imprinted on the darkness of my mind, breaking mind, broken mirror, ego facets everywhere, spilling out onto the road like a slinky carcraash. Light, light> it was speaking to me through light, the ache of it so far away now, the memory too much to bear> Smoky Bear, Yogi Bear, wise man bear, I'm wrapping myself in cartoons, in childhood memes.

‘Hey, innerspaceboy, don’t do this.... You’ll be okay, I promise,’ Kali repeats, kind Kali, Mother Kali, words splattering like the gentle buzz of television, grey and warm and comfy> I rub myself in her words. ‘But if you think you’re going to be sick - let us know and we’ll stop, alright?’

‘You **had** to get a bloody two door, didn’t you?’ I joke, forming words, a gentle television buzz all around, the words leading me back from the light, making it alright, Sunday afternoon alright. I bend down low and breathe through my knees, breathing in the refuse of a thousand Saturday nights, nights like Arabian labyrinths, stories within stories and words within words, a polystyrene wonderland all there on the floor, all of it mixing in my head and rumbling through my stomach; jewels.

‘Ahhhh fuck! Watch it, man!’ Phooey screams as the Hoonmobile hits a pothole or a possum or a space hopper, maybe some small denizen of Carnegie circa 1978. Ganja and smoke and bongwater fly up in a frozen parabolic arc as the Hoonmobile takes to the air, Flying Nun-like, holiest mother you’ve ever seen and for a second everything is quiet and timeless and beautiful, and without words...

And then the Hoonmobile hugs the road like a lover and the suspension groans with the impact and the bongwater spurts and comes, climaxes over Phooey’s little red slacksuit, the Hong Kong Phooey karate outfit, and a haze of pungent smoke spreads throughout the car, and we all inhale deeply and dream of a better world, the one around the corner> sharp angle, a little dream of you...

‘Fuck FUck **FUCK FUCK FUCK!**’ Phooey spits as he lies in the debris of a class two felony, desperately sucking at the last shards of smoke curling from the bottle and ignoring the wet stench in his lap.

‘What are you doing, hon? You sure you can still drive?’ Kali whispers, gentle Kali, Girl-Kali, laying purple fingers on Coyote’s broad shoulder, magicking him down to her groove: calm.

‘Yeah, yeah, sorry ‘bout that...’ Coyote mumbles in a daze, his blue eyes narrowing into thin slits, focused like the horizon at dawn, holding back a powerful force. ‘Those Double

Dips must've been more intense than we thought.'

'Or maybe it was that half tab of the Strawberry tab...' I smile from down by the floor, trying to keep it all together. 'Or the bongos back at the flat. Or maybe the overdose of Trek videos, yeah, that could definitely be it...tonka tonka hunka hunka burnin' love...in fact, there should be a health notice with the previews - 'Warning: Klingons can damage your health.' 'The Starship Enterprise can affect your pregnancy.' 'Please do not watch Star Trek and drive!' '

'Oh, why didn't you stay in London!' Kali quips, Mean-Kali, Destroyer Kali, slip between the molecules and dissolve the bonds Kali> words like neutrino bombs disintegrating people and leaving the buildings standing, empty shells: Kali. Then she tenses in the front seat, remembering the why, what a stupid thing to say, and a hot flush sweeps over her as the moment passes.

'Hey, Davey,' Kali says, using Coyote's real name, slipping now, names, thoughts, sadnesses, all slipping into the night. 'Pull into that Food Barn and I'll get some supplies. ' She fumbles through her combat pants for a mint flavoured I-Ching paper and rolls a joint. Six thin black lines are etched into hexagrams across the bottom of the rolling paper, the broken lines Yin, the unbroken lines Yang, the tobacco Dr.Pat mixed with gentle herbs. 'Lu. Treading carefully,' she announces, lighting up. 'A time of correct manners and good humour to ally fears of infringement and close contact.'

Coyote grins and slows the rattling bulk of the Hoonmobile, swinging it in a perfect Euclidean angle into the Food Barn, snuggling tight between two steaming metal husks with their engines warming.

'Here, Bil-E, you probably need this more than I do,' Kali offers, all things born from the womb of Kali's chaos, handing me the joint and extricating herself from the gravity of the car. 'You guys want anything?'

'A towel,' Phooey deadpans, pulling a sour face, a politician's face> grey suit reality and the six o'clock news all rolled into one. 'And maybe a chocolate milk.'

'Chips,' Coyote barks, all dog when it comes to food, don't get near that mutt when he's

feeding he'll bite your arm off. 'Salt and vinegar, accept no substitutes!'

'Bil-E? What about you?'

What about you, Bil-E?

I'm staring out the window at the Food Barn, watching nocturnal consumers bath themselves in anti-tans, blue light neon cancers built up over days and weeks and months of junk food bathing, long hours walking the aisles reading gnostic messages hidden on the back of chocolate bars, looking for the Spiderman toy in that last box of Fruit Loops, always looking...

'Hello, Earth to Bil-E?' Kali smiles, 'c'mon...I know you're in there...'

'Chocolate. Just some chocolate,' I say, dragging on the end of the joint and letting the smoke enter me in a wave of numbness as I lock onto a strange figure slumped by the garbage bin outside the Food Barn. Lock and fix> pan in:

Strange figure: wrapped in grey-black dreadlocks ashing down to the ground and spilling in fluid Gordian knots along the concrete. Strange figure: with dark black skin, half Indian looking, like a Sadhu holy man, half Aborigine like on the back of the old one dollar note. Strange figure: with eyes like deep pools of black ballooned across a bloodshot skein of white film. Strange figure, go figure.

Impression: a giant interdimensional child, sunlight for skin and stars for dreams has reached into our world, taken the figure from an Aboriginal fuzzy felt set and smoothed him onto the new backdrop, the new 'reality', oblivious to the incongruity.

Sunlight for skin

Impression: a giant raggedy-ann doll, haunted by bad land deals, disease and death, a black-man-devil, stitched together with bits of other people's clothes, denim and flannel covering white paint and ash that mingles in soot streaks across his body, tribal tattoos etching him into the moment, forever.

Stars for dreams

Impression: strange figure smiles.

'...I...I don't feel all that...*huuuhhh*...tuff, I'm going to get some air, okay?'

'Hang in there,' Coyote howls, taking the joint and dragging deeply.

'Yeah man, like...' Phooey begins, but his words are cut short by a flowing hail of liquid language hitting the ground as I spew out the door.

So there I am staring down at what looks like Twisties mixed with water sticking hot against the bitchumen and then there's a voice like crickets and dust laughing from behind me.

'You master the smoke or it master you, see, young fella.'

'Yeah, thanks, mate,' I snap, looking up, so high now, this black man a giant dwarfing me. Heavy magick shit spinning like inversed bees nests, riding the currents of body language and conversation, magick weaving between us, pulling us together, testing each other.

I wipe the vomit from my mouth and picture Gold Kryptonite, the one that takes all your powers away; the thought bubbles up from nowhere, my mind on automatic defense as I invoke the cartoon god and spin some celluloid magick around this mad abo with the crazy eyes. 'We weren't doing anything, right, I'm just feeling a bit sick, y'know?'

'I know this sickness,' the strange figure says, dust and insects weaving through the night, this moment, ancient wrinkles settling in the dark grooves across his face. 'Smoke sickness, ya got it youngfella, I got it, we all got it, ya know what I mean.'

'Yeah...uh, right, guess so,' I say, getting to my feet.

This guy's heavy shit, old magick, it's wafting off him like cheese. He pongs to all hell and the smell gets in you, does it's work... I can feel it. I take a deep breath, exhaust smoke and air filling my lungs. Then Kali's neon silhouette fills the door before us, the crack between worlds, food in hand and pout on face as she munches away on a Kit-Kat bar.

'Hey, whatcha doin' Bil-E, you okay?' she says, swinging through the door and eyeing the strange figure. 'Who's your friend?'

'I dunno...it's an X-Files moment, okay?'

'My name's a secret thing, lady, all of them.' His words are slow and langid like there's all the time in the world and you aren't going anywhere, so you might as well get comfortable and settle in and maybe you'll learn something. 'But I read this comic once, a Yank thing, yeah, oh, yeah, years back it was. Had this black fella in it, see, and his name was Tyroc.'

Breathing the smoke, the long night of the dream. 'In his lingo it meant 'Scream of the Devil.'

Spider-Mother eats her young, eats all the males, they spurt their seed and Kali-Mother eats them all to the grave. 'Are you for real?' Kali asks, reverting to a thick wogspeak.

'Real as the snake with it's belly against the world, shedding the skin of time, lady. Real as Darwin after the storm, with the rooves of their tin world blown clear off. Real as that smoke you're blowin in that car, real sweet by the smell of it. Get me some of that old time magick and I could get high enough to smoke the world away, ya hear me?' His eyes glisten like dark pools, his voice the centre of the cyclone.

'Yeah, yeah, this time I do, I really do. Smoke that pain away, let it go, yeh. Too raw. Smoke it away. What's your name again?' I ask.

'Tyroc,' the black man says, and the smell of sweat and piss and shit wafts off him in a hazy wave.

'Hey, pleased to meet you, yeh. This is...'

'Kali, 'Mother of Destruction',' Kali smiles, holding out her chalk white hand with purple fingers; Mixenthcutl, beautiful death reaching from behind the grave curtain. 'He's Bil-E, 'He Who Returns From Over Waters', and that's Coyote and Phooey,' she says, pointing to the car, or as they're known in our language, 'Two Dogs Barking Bloody Mad'. Enchanted to meet you, 'Scream of the Devil.'

'Don't mind her, she's Zippy,' Phooey says. 'Y'know, Zen Inspired Professional Pagan. Chaos magick, bad taste in music, all that stuff. '

Lizards, snakes, spiders: a palette of primal consciousness spins around with centrifugal force like a Dreamtime Wheel of Fortune as something old and deep rustles to the top and shakes off a long sleep in Tyroc's eyes. 'Pleased to meet ya, lady, whatever fancy lingo you put it in. Haven't seen a smoke like yours for a looonng time,' he smiles.

'Say again?' Kali says, eyes hooked by his deep pools, going under.

'Your smoke, yeah? I can see it in ya, rainbow smoke under the white, snaking around, lookin for a way out.'

'No shit!' Kali says, laughing, smiling, Broken-Kali Yuga, new world coming...

'Oh yeah? Stonkin! What've I got then?' I laugh.

'You've got no smoke, whitefella, it's all been sapped by the pain,' Tyroc says, and he turns and sits down again.

'Hey, hey...what'you bloody mean by that?' I ask. 'What the hell fuck shit you mean by that, I thought we were gonna be friends, mate?'

'Bil-E...'

Metallic clang of a car door, Holden...no, Toyota, fading into the night.

'Hey? Who told you, huh? How'd you know, it's none of your fucking business, you stupid Abo! Who told him, Kali?' Coyote and Phooey are by my side, holding me down but Jesuspaghetti there's Ahriman pulsing in my veins, in the heat of the night, I suddenly want to kill this fucking bastard who's got in my way and poking at things which are none of his bloody business.

'I told ya, mate, I smoked you. I've got eyes, I can see ya pain, boy.'

'Easy Bil-E, c'mon,' Coyote says, all edgy like, looking around nervously.

'You don't want to be doing this, man,' Phooey drawls, sandy hair spilling from side to side, still holding me down.

'You've still got a bit of the sight in ya though, haven't ya?' Tyroc drawls, black eyes overlapping with mine like the ripples of two ponds intersecting, two magicks joining.

'White Man's sight, yeah, from a test tube, no djang, no spirit in it, but just enough to see something, yeah?'

All the muscles in my back bunch into knots and macramae across my shoulders. 'You're weirding me, man, serious skullshit. I don't need this, y'know? Not now, it's too bloody much, alright?' I can feel it spiralling up from the dark place again, a tidal surge of pain and broken glass, all edges, no handholds to grab hold of, no way to control it> a whirlpool.

'Who the hell are you, anyway?'

'You know the name, youngfella.' Grey stained teeth stand out bright against the black ivory of his skin as a smile pulls itself across his face.

‘Hey, look, it was nice to meet you, Tyroc, but we don’t need any grief, okay? Before you two get on each others’ backs and drown in the river, little scorpion, little turtle, we’d better split,’ Kali smiles.

‘No way, wait a bloody sec, I’m not going anywhere till I find out how he knows...you know...’

‘If the cops come by we’re in big trouble,’ Phooey says, grinding the joint butt into the ground, smiling like a Gameshow host.

‘Ganesh, binder of fucking demons!’ Kali mutters, pretty mouthed Kali, but she must see some of the hurt and anger in my eyes because she immediately softens. ‘Oh, for shit’s sake, not here. In the car. Let’s get out of here.’

‘No. Please, guys. I need to know, alright? I know this makes no sense, but when has that stopped us before? C’mon, we’re the Barrellfull of Monkeys. We’re crazy. Please...’

Coyote looks at Kali and Kali looks at Phooey and they all look at me and Tyroc in the neon light of the Food Barn, domino looks spiralling round and round as the magick weaves between us and the wheel comes to a stop... Please...

{{{{{{{{{{THIS IS WHERE WE’D HAVE TO CUT THIS STORY OFF}}}}}}}}}}

‘Alright. Alright. We bail. And he comes too,’ Coyote says, pointing at Tyroc. ‘Scream of the Devil’, welcome to the Hoonmobile. Watch the spew by the door...’

Jackpot. Top dollar.

Tyroc smiles magick, magick dust dusting eyes, eyes opening to the crack between worlds. ‘You shouldn’t just leave that there, see, youngfellas, there’s power in that. White man’s sick, yeah, but smoke sickness.’ He reaches out a black, black hand streaked with ash and fingers the sick. Ash falls from his fingers and hand, ash falls from his chest and ash falls from his hair. Ash falls in little deaths and puddles in the Twistie coloured pool, darkens it.

‘That is totally mad, man...’ Phooey drawls, gagging on his chocolate milk.

‘Look here, whitey,’ Tyroc says, as his sunset fingers prod and peel and pick at the spew, teasing it like a cartoon hole. ‘Look here if you want to see.’ It’s a funny ashen orange screaming to be purple, to come out of the colour closet. It’s purple like Kali’s hair, purple

like dusk, purple like something old and dying and going down, and as I look at it the eyes in
my head can see the world spinning round

and round

and round and round

and the whirlpool 's tugging at me,

the sun is going down,

the world'spinning round,

the whirlpool's tugging at me,

round and round

round and round

Right through to the other side.

Now:

Stop.

Slow.

. Unfold...

Sunlight sings through the treetops in a language of light, flickering patinas across the
blood red shutter of your eyelids. Off on off on binary streams of warmth. Off on off on/
enfolding you in a grammar of light> off on off on, heat rising> melting you're melting in
the light, the understanding...

So beautiful.

'It's the trees...the scent of eucalyptus or something, can you smell it?' I'm saying, lying on
the ground, eyes closed against the light. ' This has already happened, hasn't it?

Everythings running together , fuck man, this is so intense, I think I'm melting, oh man...'

I take a deep breath as the words leave me and reverberate through the air. ' I used to go to
this strict Catholic school in the country, right, and I swear, all the kids used to rub gum or
wattle or eucalyptus or something, some crumbly green leaf all over their palms so the wax
would coat it and numb the pain when the nuns whacked it with the ruler when you were
bad. Course, then the nuns started caning you on the knuckles...'

Phoeey: 'Look at the sky, man, just look at the sky...'

Setting sun the flavour of vegemite spread across the surface of the sky, a viscous glaze as far as the eye can see...sunlight...no sign of the moon, even though it's meant to be night, isn't it?

'You had nuns?' Coyote smiles, his perfect white teeth surrounded by a goatee beard. He's got Elfin eyes, puckish, full of old glamour and knives and faerie folk magick spiralling through his blood. 'That's weird, man...' he trails off, entranced by a storm of insects quicksilvering about in kamakazi trajectories down by the ground, the electrical buzz of wings smeared through the air.

Buzz buzz buzzzzzing

'Y'know, I'm sure I've been to this park before, y'know, years ago, when I was a kid...yabbie fishing with Robert Brendan when we were nine. We were in the Scouts together.' Buzz buzz buzzzzzing, caught it now, the sound's spreading, see, as far as the eye can see...

'Robert Brendan, why is there always a Robert Brendan?' Coyote laughs, and hugs the grass and it enfolds him, moves with his weight like a great green waterbed. 'Craig Johnstone, Captain of the cricket team. We caught yabbies too, in the pond under the bridge there,' he points. We turn our heads and optic nerves pinch and zoom and focus on the green, so much green and brown and blue and sky and earth and all the textures in between, rolling out in a wave too big and long to surf, no end to the park pulsing around us as white butterfly wings hopscotch through the air and leaves fall on invisible winds dropping through time...

'Wow...'

Phoeey: 'This is really coming on, man...'

'Did you ever catch yabbies, though? I think

(think fall

think words

fall

through time like leaves, like insects buzzing, smearing across the invisible canvas)...

The wind blows a child's laugh, cries carried by the breeze.

'...uh...wow...sorry, the sky, it's flipping me out, yeah...losing myself in it...'

'Yabbies,' Coyote prompts, shimmying down on his bum towards the pond.

'Yeah, yabbies...I don't think we ever actually caught any...though I can remember having leeches stuck on my legs...'

Bil-E: Wave of coldheat over skin, burning, burning, this heat's too much, park's too much, everywhere, too many things, trees and leaves and ground and grass all melting together, exploding fractally into memory scents of the country, of Tocumwal and river banks and bush tuckerbags, tortishell cats split at the ends, birthing on wooden planks leading to musty outdoor toilets, bales of hay stacked against fences, dogs napping in the shade of crushed lily gardens around an old weatherbeaten house, a web of chickenshit caking the walls of corrugated tin sheds, chooks bwarking in a feathery symphony, lizards flitting across piles of wood in the sunlight...

'I wonder where like, Craig Johnstone is now, yeh? Or Robert Brendan, y'know, all those guys... They're probably in parks just like this one, y'know, tripping out of their heads, just like us...'

In the sunlight, melting
smearing across the invisible canvas

'Robert Brendan's dead. Stepped on a cricket wicket two years ago up in the Northern Territory. He picked up some tropical infection and was dead within a week.' I'm staring straight ahead into the sun, not looking away.

Coyote: 'Oh, shit, man...'

Phooey: 'Like, are you guys feeling this or what? Warp Nine, definitely...'

I'm shaking off the sun and blinking it away. 'Yeah, I'm there, Phooey, wherever we are.' I lick my lips and savour the dryness in my throat, dry like vomit, hot vomit sticking to the concrete like mad dogs rutting. Vomit? Hot vomit on the bitchumen...when...when...

'I swear...I'm sorry, probably sounds mad, but I feel like a born again Australian, right, like tripping, all of it's information, the sun, the trees, the smells, all interacting, bombarding me, like a virus snaking through, making me feel Australian again...it's

weird, really weird...'

Coyote smiles, hooking the day, the vast warm moment around us and projects it through his smile. 'I'm glad you're back, man. All the Crew, together again. Barrellfull of Monkeys, eh?'

Phooey: 'Yeah. And I'm sorry, y'know, about your mum and all, it's shit man, really is...'

I close my eyes and can feel the falling sun, the sun of the fourth world and the worlds before falling on my face, someone else's words in my head. Chemicals fire, emotions welling, a huge sadness laps against the outside of my insides, something about another world, the other side of a whirlpool. 'Yeah. A real shit,' I say, my voice cracking, saliva gone awol, my whole body in mutiny. 'But what can you do, mate, what can you do...fuck this acid...it's Tonka Toy Tuff...'

Coyote cries as the sun sets, howling for the moon to come on. 'At least you had time, yeh, like I know, or I don't know what it must have been like, but you got to say goodbye, yeh...'

'Yeh.'

Wind rustles through the trees

smearing across the invisible canvas

And...

The day melts into a rainbow of currency colours. Something flutters in that nexus, some trick of light, shapes, something like wings, the sunset says...

'Guys, look at...'

Iced vovo wings with jam down the middle and pink icing either side, Kirlian auras the colour of Jerilderies and Wodongas and the tuckshops of youth...

'Can you see it... The angel...?'

And I've flipped, total wipeout, lost in a rip, drowning, not surfing now, eyes pinballing in the back of my skull, jerking around, and Coyote and Phooey lurch up and freak out, too, bad trip in the park, shitfuck, Christ on a stick, what'ya do, I'm going under, screaming, bawling in the park...what'ya do...?

And I'm gone.

Now:

'Saw her, yeh, wrapped in a rainbow, shinin' down on you,' the blackman says from somewhere or when, his hand dark and heavy and wrapped in dusk. His other hand's wrapped in sick and ash, dried purple like a bruise, a bruise in time. 'Now you see a little how I see, yeh...how important the smoke is.'

Smell of old vomit, bitchumen, wings smeared across an invisible canvas: now.

'Tonka fucking toy tuff...' But I'm lost for words; all language has drowned in the whirlpool.

'What is it, Tyroc? What'd he see?' Kali asks, purple Kali, polite Kali, collect the set and win a prize Kali. 'What'd you fucking **do** to him?'

'You can see, little woman. Smoke me. What'd I do to him?'

'Not here,' Kali counters, eyes spearing the night, the long dark night in the blackman's eyes. 'In the car, now.' Coyote, Kali, Phooey and the man in black scrunch in next to me, tight in the smoked filled Hoonmobile, scrunched tight in the carpark, blending in like suburban chameleons at the drive-in, except this movie's unfolding within the car. Search for a Way Cool Place screening now>

'What the hell are we doing...?' Coyote barks.

'We're getting to the bottom of this,' I snap, grabbing the bong off Kali and lighting up. Tyroc smiles beside me and breathes in the smoke I exhale. 'We're going to find out just how this Carnegie magic man here can see inside us,' I say, smoke trailing out my mouth and dissipating through the Hoonmobile. 'Or if he's just full of shit.'

'A wiseman knows he's full of shit, mate - that's when it's time to crap,' Tyroc laughs, huge belly laugh from deep within that rocks the car, the sound of drunken crickets filling the dusty air.

'Man, can you just get on with whatever it is you're doing because it fucking **STINKS** in here,' Phooey garbles, holding his nose. 'And gimme that bong.'

'Uh-Uh, packer's perogative,' Kali smiles. Packing-Kali, blowing the smoke lives are made of. 'Hey, Tyroc, what's the deal then? You a shaman or something? You like, one of those

Indian holy men who walk round buck naked, stoned all the time?’ She lights the bong and sucks the smoke deep into her lungs, the melody of bubbling water her backtrack. ‘Anyone can find God when they’re stoned,’ she exhales.

Tyroc licks his split black lips, heals them with magick spit and takes in a deep breath. His eyes follow the bong around the car, flitting to and fro like a lizard hugging the sunburnt earth. ‘You can find whaddever ya look for in the smoke, lady, there’s lots of pebbles on a beach, yeah. And I’m flyin real high, like birds, yeh, so high I could fall out of the sky, but not to the ground. All I need is one more wind...’

‘There you bloody go again, for Christsakes. Full of bullshit...’

Tyroc reaches over and grabs my hands. ‘Feel that, hey, youngfella? I can feel the blood there, the veins, all the workings under the skin, like witchedygrubs burrowing through the dirt, see.’ His hands are old and leathery and warm as they run up and down my arm, old like time, like memories, full of power. ‘And I can read good, too, yeh? Read ya eyes, the lines on ya face, the slump of ya body, s’like a book, yeah, when you know how to see. Thought I just taught you that, how to see.’

‘S’nothing. Just a flashback, that’s all. You weired me, man. All the smoke, the vomit, you weired

me, s’nothing. Like this smoke thing, y’know, on the inside, that crap, you can’t see that, Tyroc, don’t expect me to swallow that one, yeh.’

Coyote exhales a thin stream of grey and passes the bong to Phooey, drifting, drifting through an inner fog.

‘You never know,’ Kali says languidly, still spinning her magick. ‘There’s a lot of shit out there, Bil-E, you know that.’ Soundtrack fades in.

‘But this...Kali...I saw things, today, in the park, and he knows things...’

‘Listen to the little smoke,’ Tyroc says, watching Phooey now, eyes never too far from the action. ‘You think what ya want, see, but I see things you don’t even have words for, whiteys. The land, the smoke, she gives ya eyes if ya want to see, better than that booze you fellas push. You’re full of the starless night, mate, the dark, it’s blottin ya out inside.’

Phooey's pipe crackles and burns, a bushfire in microcosm, and the smoke's pulled through into the bong, into Phooey, into the beyond.

'She died, Tyroc. My mum died.'

'I saw her. Saw her shinin down on ya in the park, been watchin you fellas in my mirror. Helped you make your own. She's not sad now, is she boy? She's shinin', she's happiness.'

'You saw it, too? In the...the sick? '

'Yep, like I just showed ya, mate. Flickered like a rainbow bird, straight through from the Dreamtime.'

Kali's voice breaks the spell, magick Kali. 'Bil-E, there's only enough mookie left for one more bong...'

Sweat trickles down the hollow of my back as I grab the bong. 'It hurts, mate, hurts so much, it's filling me. I can't take any bloody more. I can't believe you, all I want to do is forget...' The bong lights and I take it in in one long toke, right to the back of the lungs, spelunking that smoke, spreading through the pain, eating away at it like Pac Man chasing those sad blue ghosts.

Tyroc wipes long ashen dreddlocks from his face and watches me take the smoke in, the last wind. The last wind of the fourth world, last chance for the men of dusk who guard the worlds before, he says without moving his lips. The fifth world will be born in pain and despair like all the young, over and over again, riding the wheel and shedding it's skin, dying now, so close. I swear I can hear him in my fuckin head but not even in words, y'know, like overlays.

Eyes flickering like a rainbow bird.

Like the light.

And I lean forward and grab Tyroc by the head, pull his lips to mine - and there's a touch of rough, dry skin and stubble brushing my cheek - and our mouths open together, can you feel it, smoke shooting from one mouth to another, can you feel it, a blowback to stone the soul, to smoke the world into life.

'There's some of your old time magic, you old dooper. Hope it does the job.' And as I say it I can

feel the pain draining out of me, replaced with the light, the flickering rainbow light.

Tyroc smiles, his eyes closed, lips sealed, smoke curling round the secret places within him. He smiles for a day and a night and a day and a night and the crows come and circle his form, but he keeps smiling. The dingoes come and sniff his scent, then walk away with sad little steps. The snake slithers through the dust of years and curls around his leg and is still. Day falls and night crawls from the ashes of the sky. Snake begins to dream.

Tyroc opens his lips.

‘Arere Aaeeee Auurreereee AaArererererere aaaauaiaiaiaia quueeee qee
ueaeuuuuuurr wallaeeieiaiauaauauauauauaaaauuuauuuurreeeriiierrriai
yyeeyaiiii ai eererahyewalla eaheieieieaa wallaheeeerya eeieieiaiaiaieauaaaa
aaauueueeueueua
wallaaiiaururyeyayayyeahahhaaeuurrrryeayayaayuaaaaueieiaaeiiuuaeiu,’
he sings, an alien glossonalia abducting familiar vowels and rhythms and stitching them together as a molten whole, an aborigine Urspace that fills the car, the air, the space between us, each sound flowing into the other, into a vast, musical web.

No smoke escapes his lips, just sound, a primal flow of ur sounds warbling up from within, stretching out like a musical slip and slide, the sound getting deeper and deeper, crystalizing.

‘Christ on a stick...’ Kali whispers as the music takes on a purple shade, solidifying in the air. ‘Words, I can see words,’ she gasps, flinging open the car door as Tuller Marines and Wahgunyas, Ulladullas, Corowas, Yarras and Gundaguyies spill out the black man’s mouth. Kyabram, Walla Walla, Mooropna, Cootamundra, Paraburdoo, Yallingup, Borroloola, Berrigan, Coonawarra, Yerrandera, Mullewa, Kalbarri, Kalgoorlie, Gubbata, Wadbilliga, Merimbula, the Nullarbor: a thousand thousand ancient names all undergo the process of becoming in the pitch of purple light, the tone, the expanding blanket of unbroken sound.

Phoey: ‘Warp Ten, Captain...’

‘This cannot be happening,’ Coyote freaks, opening the door and jumping onto the bitchumen,

his mouth ajar, eyes riveted to the liquid language phrasing itself around him.

The words lock together in arcane grammars and the sound is bound in a seamless purple fluid, pouring out the black man's mouth. Deep indigo sunsets, purple people eaters and violet nettles, stinging old hurts away, washing the New World away as the purple liquid comes and comes and comes in giant spurts of magic jism, expanding fractally, overflowing, covering the Crew, the car, the carpark...

'Yeah, I get high enough, I knew one day I could get back, see youngfellas? Smoke the world away, just like I said,' Tyroc sings, working the words into the purple chant.

'Look at the stars,' Kali points, staring at me as I climb from the back seat of the Hoonmobile. I look down to see the universe under my skin, a bright sun beating fast in my heart. There's sunlight for skin and stars for dreams and it's playtime, time to play, the Old Skool's over and it's time to break out the toys...

'It's not just me...' I cry, each word a perfect crystal thing rippling across the purple night.

The rest of the crew clambers from the Hoonmobile with animal grace, long limbs stretching and sexing under their skin, skinned heavens pulsing with light and love across their bodies, geometries of swirling colours and forgotten sensations flooding back through the floodgates of flesh...

'...can't have a flashback when you're still tripping,' Phooey chants under his breath, purple sound waves whimsying from his mouth, lighting the air in streaks of motion.

'But we're not tripping,' Kali responds, purple Kali, magic Kali, Mother of Destruction, Quantum Kali of infinite regress spinning through the magick whirlpool into the dawn of the fifth world. 'I think this is for real...'

'You bet it's real, little lady,' Tyroc says, as the purple ripples on with a life of its own, virtual threads expanding fractally, transforming the landscape as it goes. The night sky a purple gauze, each star a rainbowangelthing singing light, lighting the way, remember the night, children?

The carpark unveils into a vast mandala of tribal art, Wandjina chalk men undulating under our feet, floating in a stoned gravity, traversing worlds. The buildings sigh and

breath in, walls expanding on Dali angles, every molecule packed with spaceluv, radiating, singing... the fifth world coming on strong...a rising hum like in old B grade sci-fi movies.

‘Hon...look at the Hoonmobile,’ Kali sings, singsongs to the magic night, her words deep and ancient pools, rippling purple as they go.

We turn, muscles floating in an underwater ballet and look at the Hoonmobile. It’s dotted with

tribal marks and animal outlines, totem spirits hugging the car, transmorgifying metal to flesh, cold science to hot magic. Bones form from the frame as it takes new shape, tyres stretching into long, sinewy legs tattooed with rubber tread. Metal warps a muscled torso as ears and eyes and a face appear> a dog’s face, red vinyl tongue wagging as oil and water salivate in thick ropes from it’s mouth.

‘It’s alive...’ Coyote laughs, as the giant car-dog bounds towards him, knocks over Phooey and pins him to the ground, licking away happily. ‘Argggh!’ Coyote screams happily as he looks up into the dog’s hubcap eyes. One is broken, blind, glazed over the colour of gaffa tape, the other an open conduit of animal love, pouring over him. ‘Down, Hoon, down!’

‘Alive...’ I say, but it comes out as a whisper, frozen, unbelieving.

‘It’s all alive, see, everyone knows that, mate. It’s just that now ya got eyes to see...’ Tyroc singsongs, all time melding, walking away from the Crew.

‘But...it’s too much, too pure, too...it can’t last, the world can’t be this beautiful...’ Kali sighs, Kali-Kali.

‘When does this trip stop?’

Tyroc stops at the front of what used to be the Food Barn, now a sparkling veneer of animal density, moulding to his step, totem-aura reaching out for him. ‘Boy, gimme one of those platypuses trapped in silver...’ he says, holding out a leathery hand.

I’m oscillating towards him, every motion a rise and fall in the outback wonderland connected to me and me to it. ‘20 cents, yeah?’ I ask, fingering the hot silver coin in my pocket.

The black man smiles and takes the money, scoops the flat, silver marsupial from the coin

and puts it in a vending machine, a little furred box that looks up with possum eyes and burps as the creature goes in. It makes a little noise, a laugh, a rattle and hum as something comes out in return> thermodynamic karma.

‘When does the Dreamtime stop?’ Tyroc laughs, holding a tiny pellet of yellow plastic, a pauntry thing, full of pyrite jewels and broken dreams, a 20 cent memory only children could love. A perfect plastic bubble, half yellow like a golden summer sunsets with barbeques in the back yard; the other a distorted transparency hiding the toy within. ‘See, boy, ya got eyes now...’

I take the bauble with lightning fingers and see:

The colour of wattle and kookaburra and Timbuktoo, of a thousand dusty Jerilderies and Numerkahs and Tocumwals that litter the countryside with caravan parks and fish and chip shops and

tides of Aussie battlers, battling against tomorrow. I can see Aunty Judy’s flannels in the 1970’s, melding with the streamers outside the porch door as the sun sets and the dogs gnaw at bones in the carefree twilight. There’s football, meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cars, the scent of TAB’s at dusk as smoke stings punters’ eyes and the results of the last race at Sandown spill over the radio. See the echoing spiderwork lattice of trams rattling through a Melbourne morning as the sun rises the colour of the old currency, streaks of crimson Chisolms that make you ache for the nostalgia of it all.

Australis: a perfect little thing, all there in the palm of my hand. A sunburnt essence stripped of the weight of the rest of the world, melted into a plastic cocoon of space and time, hot off some Taiwanese assembly line, bought for a platypus trapped in silver, swimming, melting in that little coin.

Australia.

The Dreamtime never stops...

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for Hari, Mish and Nelson