

SWAGGIE

*winner of the 1995 Spirit of Matilda Award, held in conjunction with the 100 year anniversary
of the writing of Waltzing Matilda by A.B (Banjo) Paterson,
and presented to Marco by the late great Slim Dusty*

A Swaggie's haunting, waltzing, down a dim-lit city street
Where mem'ries of Matilda and Eureka come to meet.
Where dusty dead horizons call Sundowners from the past
For a slice of pickled pork and a billy boiling fast,
And souls of long lost underdogs come sensing our dismay
To tell us that the dreams we have were theirs, just yesterday.

But the 'Peking Duck' that greets them, the Cappuccino smile
Prove Mate-ship has progressed a multi-racial country mile.
Just look to Cabramatta or the cane fields south of Cairns,
You'll find liberated Asians and continental clans.
Recall your own ancestry and then, if you be game,
Destroy their hearts and send the visionaries home again.

There's an Anzac helmet crusted in coral north of Crete.
A distinguished cheerless shrine decorates a Turkish street.
Two soldiers wait forever in a twisted ammo van
Where cattle graze forlornly on a slope in Vietnam.
Just trickles in a stream below such bridges we have crossed.
Investments in a future where the dream must not be lost.

Now beckoning our heroes down a moonlit country road
A lonely phantom searches for a friend to share her load.
She's the spirit of a culture portraying our great land
Through works of Namatjira and Oodgeroo's skilled hand.
She's a drifting shadow, mourning, where slums are home it seems
To Godless generations lost in shattered Blackman's dreams.

A spectral congregation pauses by a Billabong
Where sweet untamed aromas bless this country's wholesome song.
While in the distance race our youth in engines of the age,
Vague aspirations trapped inside a rattling metal cage.
The speeding lights fade quickly, but project a brilliant ray
Of faith in the Australian dream, their dream, just yesterday.

