ACROSS THE BAY

(Dedicated to Uncle Jack.)

To a lonely cattle station
in Australia's wild outback,
Came an old and weary abo
Who'd spent years out on the track.

He had roamed around this country,
He had been in two great wars,
He had fought to keep outsiders
From off our golden shores.

Now he was tramping his last journey,
He was on the homeward run,
For he knew his time was ending,
And his travelling days were done.

As he stood there near the homestead,
It brought back those bygone years,
For it was here he'd spent his childhood
And his old face lined with tears.

He could see the herds of cattle
As they moved them from the flood,
And once more he chased the brumbys
Through the swamps and greasy mud.

He thought then of his mother
And his poor old greyhaired dad,
And he knew they were heartbroken
When he'd left home as a lad.

And as the sun was sinking,
The old man bow'd his head,
For his time on earth was finished
And these are the words he said:

"For it's over the hill I am going,
Over the hill to-day,
I pack up now my bundle
With hands so old and slow;
For there's an ache down in my heart
And I just don't want to go.

I shall miss these fields of green
And the sky that's overhead;
I shall miss those soft sweet leaves
That sometimes were my bed,
But they'll no longer let me stay
And so I'm leaving here to-day
For that far away white house
Far away across the bay."

—by R. Sherry, Burnt Bridge.