Tricksters and Traditions: Jawoyn Stories and Story-tellers of Southern Arnhemland

collected and presented by
Francesca Merlan
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Francesca Merlan

This volume contains a set of stories told in Jawoyn, a highly endangered language of southern Arnhem Land. (Some stories contain interpellations from a neighbouring and related language, Binij Gun-Wok). The stories were recorded at various times during the compiler’s extended research association with the area and its people, thus over decades from the 1980s onwards. The volume consists of 4 sections setting out (1) the background to the language, speakership and region; (2) a set of biographies of the four speakers represented in the volume; (3) the stories themselves, in column mode with Jawoyn on one side and free English translation on the other, for maximally easy reading; and (4) a linguistically detailed version of all stories with grammatical analysis of the Jawoyn original. The set of stories is linked to audio files of each story, so that readers may listen to the original renditions as they read. The collection also has 3 regional maps and 10 photographs to enhance understanding of the region and the speakers.
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Abbreviations

3/3nsg  Third person singular on third person non-singular.
-abl   ablative case suffix
Adj    adjective
Adv    adverb
an-    -yuk-, prefix related to life, animate, cooked
ap-    applicative, benefactive and transitivising prefix
-Caus  causative
-clitic clitic
Com    comitative
con    continuative
Conj   conjunction
dat    dative
Dem    demonstrative
DAAdv  demonstrative adverb
det    determiner
dir    directional
du     dual
dur-   durative prefix –yong- with verb nan “see”
emph   emphatic
en     enclitic
exc    exclusive
f-     female
foc    focus
gen   genitive
I      irrealis
Ideo   ideophone, sound
imp    imperative
in-    intensive (-marrk, ‘really, far’, all the way’, ‘right in, up’)
inan-  -guk-, prefix referring to dead body, mass, inanimate, raw, uncircumcised
inch   inchoative
Interrog interrogative
Intj   interjection
Inst   instrumental
-loc locative case suffix
mid middle verb
N adj noun adjective
N noun
n- non(-singular)
na- na word class (male)
ng- ngan word class
ngal- ngal word class (female)
Num number
p1- past completed
p2- past continuous
Part particle
perg pergressive
Posspro possessive pronoun
pr present (non-zero) ending
Pre prefix
Prep preposition
Pro pronoun
-purp purposive suffix
rdp reduplication
rr reflexive reciprocal
sg- singular
Suf suffix
-ti time suffix
V Caus causative derived verb
V inflecting verb
Background

Jawoyn Stories and Story-Tellers of Southern Arnhemland - The Collection

This collection is the first of what will become two volumes of Jawoyn stories and narratives with attached audio files. From 1976 I began working with Jawoyn people around Katherine, Northern Territory. Over the decades I compiled a large collection of taped materials. I think it is important to make these available to various sorts of publics: first and foremost, back to the families of senior Jawoyn people with whom I have worked from the latter 1970s; second, to a wider Australian audience; and third, to an international audience who may be interested in the content, the language, or other aspects of the collection.

Warning: This book of stories contains the names and pictures of Jawoyn elders who have passed on. Most passed away some time ago, and in consultation with families, no concern was expressed about using these photographs of them from some years ago – family members viewed the pictures and obtained copies of them. In one case, however, a person depicted died since work on this publication began. His name and picture have been retained as some time has passed and it seems important to commemorate his involvement in the events and activities of the last decades.

I decided to concentrate this collection on two of the most prolific narrators and story-tellers with whom I worked (Peter Jatbula and Phyllis Wiynjorrotj), with some materials from two other speakers (Sarah Flora and Fanny Birlamjam). There remains a large volume of stories and other material recorded from other people, especially from Sarah, Sandy Barraway, Peter Jatbula’s (half-)brother, Alice Mitchell, and others. Sandy’s stories are so wide-ranging that they, too, deserve to be well represented. The intention is to produce a second volume which will fill out this range with material from another half-dozen story-tellers.

While I hope that many people will find value in this collection, it is my belief that the opportunity to hear, once again, the familiar voices and stories of their seniors will be particularly valued by relatives of these speakers, to whom this work is dedicated. Therefore the audio component is as important as the written component.

The stories and narratives are varied. Peter Jatbula was an inveterate teller of picaresque stories of particular genres, trickster stories and devil stories. He also talked about his life, his wide-ranging work on stations and at mines, and about his family and companions. Phyllis Wiynjorrotj delighted in talking about traditional practices – making things, collecting foods, and about social conventions and morals. She rarely told mythological or “dreaming” stories, but she spoke feelingly about connections between people and places (such as her and her family’s own link to Melkjarlumbu, Beswick Falls). Fanny Birlamjam told well-known myths and Dreaming stories, but
also spoke about her life around Maranboy. Sarah – an energetic, multi-skilled person – had a great deal to say about country and Dreamings all over the region.

**Jawoyn and the Region**

Jawoyn is an Aboriginal language of the Katherine and Pine Creek town areas. Many Jawoyn people today also live in settlements and towns of southern Arnhemland, including Barunga, Beswick, Weemol, Bulman, Patonga, and Jabiru, and a few, even further afield.

Into the twentieth century, Jawoyn-speaking people lived along the Katherine River, on river systems in Central Arnhemland, north and west along the Alligator River, and as far east as the Mainoru River. The disruptions of exploration, notably mining in the vicinity of Pine Creek from the 1880s, Maranboy and other mining fields from the first decades of the twentieth century, and pastoral and agricultural expansion near Katherine, and the rise and fall of pastoral properties north and east of Katherine and in Arnhemland, caused most Jawoyn-speaking people as well as other indigenous Arnhemlanders to move towards these points of European settlement, making their presence in the Arnhem escarpment and river systems of Central Arnhemland much more sporadic as the patterns of their lives changed. Jawoyn-speakers and other Aborigines from the north were present, at least periodically, around the town of Katherine from the 1920s, as peanut farms (to provide opportunities for returned soldiers) and other agricultural developments were trialled. Aborigines constituted an inexpensive workforce and most were usually released from work by pastoralists and farmers to live by their own efforts during the Wet season (roughly, November to March) when their labor was less in demand.

These living conditions for Aboriginal people around towns, farms and mining camps were rough. Many returned seasonally to work for the same bosses. Most became familiar with alcohol, methylated spirits, and opium which was sold inexpensively as opium ash from (especially but not solely Chinese) stores around Pine Creek and Katherine. Aboriginal people worked, massed along the river, and moved to and from major points of activity in the region – Katherine, the Maranboy tin fields, Pine Creek, other mine sites and stations.

World War II marked another watershed in the distribution of the indigenous population of southern Arnhemland. During the War, the Army created camps and compounds, and from 1942, all indigenous people still living more remotely in Arnhemland were made to come in to them. Camps on the Cullen River (near Pine Creek), near Katherine, and on the Waterhouse River (near Mataranka), were major collection points. After the War, those compound populations were shifted a number of times, as authorities sought locations in which to construct permanent settlements fulfilling key criteria of being relatively distant from towns, and having adequate natural water resources. Aboriginal people, unless employed, were excluded by public ordinance from living in towns until 1948. Among the most important of the settlements for Jawoyn-speaking people created in the post-War period, and which still exist today, were Beswick (1946), and Bamyili (from 1951, now renamed Barunga). Other camps, formal and informal, continued to come and go as they had for many years, in the vicinity of Katherine and Pine Creek. (See Merlan and Rumsey 1982; Merlan 1998; Powell 2009).
Jawoyn and Neighboring Languages

Jawoyn belongs to a family of languages that has been called “Gunwinyguan”, after one of the major languages of this group (Gunwinygu also often spelled Kunwinjku, Gunwinigu or Gunwinggu), which has a number of dialect variants (see Evans’ 2003 multi-dialect grammar of what he calls Bininj Gun-wok). The most widely-spoken dialect clusters within this grouping are represented in the Figure below:

![Figure 1. The Gunwinygu language family adapted from Evans (2003:33)](image)

As this shows, the closest congener of Jawoyn appears to be Warray (Harvey 1986), a now-extinct language formerly spoken in the valleys of the Margaret and upper Adelaide Rivers, around the present town of Adelaide River. The most flourishing branch of this family is Central Gunwinyguan, spoken throughout large parts of Central Arnhemland, as well as in Pine Creek, Katherine, Barunga, Beswick and Bulman/Weemol.

From the point of view of the outsider learning Jawoyn, all the other languages are unintelligible, though obviously related and with a noticeable amount of overlapping vocabulary and similarity of grammatical structure. But that unintelligibility for the outsider has nothing to do with the practical situation for indigenous people. Jawoyn was never spoken in isolation from its sister languages. All of the senior Jawoyn people I worked with over a number of decades were fluent in Jawoyn and a number of other Arnhem languages which, depending on their various backgrounds, mainly included (what they mostly called) Mayali (Evans 2003), Dalabon (Ngalkbon) (Cutfield 2011; Evans, Merlan and Tukumba 2004; Ponsonnet 2014), and Rembarrnga (McKay 1975). Most people I worked with had equal or very similar fluency in Jawoyn and Mayali (the most common pair), and some in Dalabon as well. Even the outsider like myself who
spent time with Jawoyn people learned at least to “hear” (understand) the other languages, so commonly spoken were they in camps where Jawoyn people were a sizeable proportion of residents.

Today, multilingualism in Aboriginal languages is no longer the norm in the Katherine area. Young people are no longer using Jawoyn actively. Most of the fluent and creative speakers with whom I worked have died. The language is therefore highly endangered. Depending on family background, and the extent to which their seniors used Jawoyn, some younger people (mainly in Barunga and Beswick areas) have degrees of understanding of Jawoyn. The most vital Aboriginal language of the Katherine, Barunga, and also Pine Creek areas is now Mayali, which is not indigenous to this area, but has a large reserve of active speakers extending into Arnhemland.

The history of settlement briefly sketched above is the context of this decline in Jawoyn language use. It brought great disruption. There were early reductions of population. The pull of Aboriginal people towards mining camps and other places of outsider settlement saw their routines of movement and activity radically changed; and their health, including fertility, apparently affected by introduced substances and poor living conditions. Another factor in the declining use of Aboriginal languages, more generally, in the towns and their hinterlands has been the growing strength of Kriol forms of English, which had become so widespread by the 1970s that the Barunga School preferred Kriol as a first language of literacy to any indigenous language as well as to Standard English (Sandefur 1979).

Jawoyn: People, Country and Language

Jawoyn remains, however, the identity of a large number of people of the Katherine and Barunga area who see themselves as affiliated to ‘Jawoyn country’. For many of these people, Jawoyn remains the language they consider theirs, whatever their degree of proficiency (though many also have attachments to one or more other languages and regions, via a parent or other relative).

The broad area of “Jawoyn country” was associated with a large number of clan (mowurrwurr) groupings. My research from the mid-1970s yielded the names of 43 such groupings that were, or are, (fairly consistently) identified as Jawoyn. Though, presumably, all were linked with “country” approximately within the broader area illustrated in Figure 2, for some clan groupings, more precise affiliations to particular sub-areas of Jawoyn country could never be established, given the historical disruptions. For some others, their identity was always or often referred to as “mixed” (e.g., Jawoyn-Ngalkbon “mixed”, or Jawoyn-Mayali “mixed”), indicating that their attachments were to areas near those to which speakers of the other languages were affiliated, and where presumably they were concentrated or predominant in earlier times.

Following the passage of the Aboriginal (Northern Territory) Land Rights Act 1976, Jawoyn people were able to lay claim to significant areas of the land from which they had originated. The Jawoyn (Katherine Area) Land Claim, concluded in 1987, saw them become Traditional Owners of Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) National Park, with a handback ceremony having taken place in 1989 (Merlan and Rumsey 1982; for the final report, see Toohey 1988). Gimbat (Stage III) Land Claim, the hearing of which began in 1992 and extended in sessions over the next several years, saw a sub-set of Jawoyn who originated from this area become Traditional Owners of this land, which constitutes part of Stage III of Kakadu National Park (see Jawoyn (Gimbat Area) Land Claim 1995).

A body called the Jawoyn Association (www.jawoyn.org) was incorporated in 1985 at the conclusion of the Jawoyn Land Claim. It now has about 500 members.
Jawoyn was probably like Bininj Gun-wok (Mayali) in being spoken in a number of regionally and socially differentiated forms. The names of several different varieties of Jawoyn were well known to older speakers, and some of them seem to have reflected their regional distribution. But it was never possible to match the names of these varieties to linguistic differences that could be systematically recorded; they always had a vaguer, and as noted, apparently roughly regional, reference. We cannot be certain how different these forms were. People talked about Gerniny’mi seemingly associated with an area approximately as far south as Gimbat and onto the Arnhem escarpment. Letburrit seems to have been spoken on the lower Katherine River, and perhaps also on the Ferguson River down to its junction with the Edith. (It is also possible, however, that informants’ statements of these distributions may partly reflect their knowledge of the whereabouts of speakers of these varieties, rather than being an historically stable regional location.) Another common way speakers had of making distinctions among language forms was by talking about varieties of Jawoyn as “heavy” or “strong” (nganwirlang), versus “light” or “quick” (nganbarlok), kinds of distinctions also commonly made in other regions with respect to other languages.

In my work, I recorded some systematic but minor differences among what were probably regionally differentiated varieties of Jawoyn. There were also some differences among speakers in vocabulary, and in some common grammatical formatives and words. For further illustration and explanation of these, and an introduction to the structure of the language, the reader is referred to the Grammar Outline in the Jawoyn-
English Dictionary (Merlan and Jacq 2005a, b; Merlan with Wiynjorrotj et. al. 2005; see also Merlan 1989).

Jawoyn, as it was spoken over the years I recorded it (from 1976 into the 2000s), was quite unified, despite these minor differences. Such similarity probably represents simplification of an earlier, more complex dialect situation, with much leveling of differences having occurred as a result of the concentration of Aboriginal people in fewer locations, especially after World War II. This is also suggested by the fact that speakers of Jawoyn acknowledged having heard a range of speech varieties they said they could not speak or imitate properly, but which (as above), they typically identified as being from different parts of wider Jawoyn country.

Orthography, Spelling and Questions and Notes on Audio Files

The following are the sound segments of Jawoyn; a section below the chart contains information concerning the spelling system adopted in this volume.

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<th>Velar</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
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<td>d</td>
<td>rd</td>
<td>j</td>
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<td>(short/lax):</td>
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<td>(long/tense):</td>
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<td>t</td>
<td>rt</td>
<td>tj</td>
<td>k</td>
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<td>nn</td>
<td>ny (and yn)</td>
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<td>Low</td>
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Jawoyn has 5 vowels and two semi-vowels y and w.

No words are vowel-initial in their basic form. There are a few forms, however, from which an initial nasal is quite regularly dropped in rapid and even ordinary speech, and these are sometimes written as vowel initial in the texts in order to conform to the audio tape as much as possible.

The forms from which an initial nasal is quite often dropped are: noun class prefix ngan- (which therefore sometimes occurs as -an, also in certain adverbial forms); locative noun class prefix ni- (which especially in place names sometimes occurs as i-); and noun class prefix (masculine or majority noun class prefix, depending on dialect) na- (which therefore can occur as a-).

All word- and morpheme initial stops are written with the ‘voiced’ symbols b, d, j, g. (There is no contrast between short and long stops in these positions, nor is there a contrast in those positions between alveo-dental and retroflex stops). Long stops only occur contrastively intervocally and medially following non-nasal sonorants. For instance, there is a contrast between e.g. jati ‘frog’ (long stop), and (ngan-)jadeng
‘branch, tributary’ (not a minimal pair, but a close pair); between *gupu* ‘kangaroo’ and *gaba* ‘try’ (particle). Such medial contrastive long stops are written with the voiceless stop series *p, t, rt, tj, k*.

All stops which are final in closed syllables, and word-finally, are written with the voiceless stop series. There is no long-short stop contrast is this position. Thus *netbu*– ‘carry on shoulder’, where *t* in this position cannot contrast with *d*; *Bukbuk* ‘pheasant coucal’, where *k* here in closed syllable and word-finally does not contrast with *g*; *dutjma*– ‘to pound’ where there can be no contrast between *j* and *tj* here; and so on.

There are alveo-palatal and retroflex liquid and rhotic contrasts, but only the retroflex rhotic occurs word-initially, and even so is very rare in this position.

Glottal stop is a positionally restricted but significant segment. It occurs principally in verb forms composed of an initial particle segment plus inflectible auxiliary, e.g. *dirn*+*ma*– ‘to come out, emerge’; and in reduplicative and a few other nouns, e.g. *na-gar* ‘gar’ ‘old people’ (pl.; also *na-ga* ‘gar’); and *jey* ‘mi’ ‘kingfisher’.

There is an issue orthographically of distinguishing between combinations of alveolar nasal and velar stop (a combination that typically occurs across morpheme boundaries, e.g. *bon-gaywunay* ‘she refused them’ where *bon*- is a regular 3sg object prefix and *gaywu*- ‘to refuse’) and a plain velar nasal, written *ng*. Given that most of the former combinations occur across morpheme boundaries, the convention in the parallel Jawoyn-English column texts is NOT to place a distinguishing full stop between morphemes that regularly result in the combination of *(r)n+g*, but to assume that, by looking at the interlinear spelling, the reader will soon learn that *warn* is very common, and one of the most common sources of this combination of nasal *rn+g*. Another common source is the combination of an objective prefix form plus stem beginning in *g*, e.g.: as above, *bongaywum* ‘she refused them’, analyzable as *bon-gaywu-m* them-refused-past 1; or *bongukje* ‘it ate them’ *bon-guk-je*; *bongenduyay* ‘he waited for them’ with 3sg object prefix *bon-genduyay*.

There are cases of largely verb initial prefix + verb stem combinations that may look identical to nasal+*g* in spelling, but are distinguishable because it will soon become clear that the combination is to be otherwise analyzed, e.g. *bungemenay* ‘they went in’ is *bu-ngemenay* with 3sg SUBJECT prefix *bu-* following by the verb stem *ngeme*– ‘to go in’; so that the *ng* combination here represents the velar nasal, not *n+g*.

Note that the orthography used here differs in some regular respects from that used in Merlan and Jacq 2005a, b. At that time, people consulted at Barunga and Beswick opted for using the voiceless symbols word- and morpheme-initially, as well as finally. There was a later change of view, which the usage here conforms to. But the important point remains that word and morpheme-initially there is no long/short stop contrast which is significant. There are no contrastive pairs such as English big/pig; in Jawoyn all word- and morpheme initials could be written either *b*- or *p*- . The issue is a spelling choice on which opinion has changed. The change has meant that it is possible to use *b*- initially, and *p* medially where there is short/long contrast; the voiceless symbols are also used word-finally and at the margin of closed syllables. (The former orthography had *p* initially and finally, and *pp* vs. *p* where there is a medial long/short contrast).

Capitalization occurs on personal names (often following the requisite prefix, e.g. *naBerrakbat, naGudunu*) and on placenames, e.g. *Jeywunay, Worreluk;* as well as
on noun forms which are being used as names of specific dreaming or creator figures in the stories, e.g. *ngalDurrk* ‘emu’ (where emu is feminine, hence prefixed with feminine *ngal*- and capitalized as a specific dreaming figure, rather than *durrk* ‘emu’).

Where some place names and a few other words are very regularly assimilated to Aboriginal-language or Kriol pronunciation, they are written in a form approximating Kriol, e.g. *Gajarran* ‘Katherine’, *jitijin* ‘citizen’. However, many of the interpolations of speakers in English are left in English orthographic form to make the text and the line-by-line analyses easier for the average reader. The English spelling does not reflect the actual pronunciation, but is intended, as noted, to make reading easier. The many places where speakers use some common English/Kriol flavouring, temporal and conjunctive particles (na ‘now’, or ‘or’, ‘too’, ‘but’) are transcribed as such.

In texts where Mayali is used, and sometimes interspersed with Jawoyn, this is indicated by superscript $^\text{[M]}=\text{Mayali}$, and $^\text{[J]}=\text{Jawoyn}$.

On some occasions the compiler (FM) has asked questions of the speakers, and this is either transcribed, or indicated briefly. Some of her interventions are not transcribed, but the force of them becomes clear as the speaker continues by answering.
References
Jawoyn Association. www.jawoyn.org
Merlan, Francesca and Rumsey, Alan 1982. The Jawoyn (Katherine area) land claim: Claim Book / prepared by F. Merlan and A. Rumsey on behalf of Aboriginal people who are making a claim to unalienated Crown land in the vicinity of Katherine, Northern Territory. Darwin: Northern Land Council.
2 The story-tellers

The following are short biographies of the four speakers represented here. In each case an effort is made to give a picture of where, and under what conditions, they spent their lives. All of these people had extensive knowledge of people and country. Phyllis’ stories concentrated on what she regarded as her home area around Maranboy-Barunga-Beswick, while Peter’s and Sarah’s stories were very wide-ranging. There was a special link and continuing association between Sarah and Fanny due to their common association with the Mainoru River, and common experience around Maranboy, to the end of the latter’s days.

Fanny Birlamjam

Photograph 1. Sarah Flora (facing directly), Rita Scott (back), Phyllis Wiynjorrotj, Fanny Birlamjam (r), Margaret Katherine (front). [Robert Blowes]

Fanny was a diminutive woman, also therefore known affectionately as Ngalduljuwuk, “Short-Body” or “Shortie”. She was Yurl’mayn clan, and quite a number
of her close relatives had lived for periods of time, as she did, on the Maranboy mining field. Some of them also, like her, had lived at Beswick and Barunga. But they, and she, also regularly travelled to points north, to Gimbat and Jabiru. Some of the men in her family had done stockwork around Gimbat and Goodparla, and in the Alligator Rivers region.

Fanny had a daughter with Jim Berry while on the Maranboy field, and that daughter had two daughters, Johna and Betty Berry, who were usually with Fanny or around her camp during the period I knew her at Barunga.

Another of her closest countrymen was Sarah Flora (see page 21). Sarah was Girrimbitjba clan, and her country was on the Mainoru River. Fanny and Sarah shared a dreaming, Durrk (Emu, in Jawoyn, ngurrurdu in Ngalkbon), located in places on the Mainoru River which both of them knew well.

Fanny introduced herself to me by saying:


“I am Yurl’mayn. Do you know Nyaluk? (Sarah) We are ngurrurdu together.
We are both Durrk, it’s our dreaming. [Durrrk together, mijimet from English “messmate”] Our country (is) Wetji Namurrgaymi (on the Mainoru River).”

Fanny knew Maranboy and adjacent areas very well. She was a practised bushwoman, much loved and sought after as companion by Sarah and others at Barunga. She was shy of community affairs and administrators, and usually got others to mediate for her with regard to some of those things.

She used to start the mornings by rising and calling the name of her dreaming: Durrk ngurrurdu, Wetji!
Peter Jatbula, who also went by the name Peter Williams (his wife Julie’s last name), was born in Gimbat Station, at a place called Jatbula. That station is now part of Kakadu Stage III. According to Jawoyn custom, by which at least one of an individual’s personal names is that of his or her birthplace, he was known as Jatbula. His name was a signal to people of Jawoyn background that he came from a region associated with a powerful creator figure called Bula. This link came prominently to the fore in the last ten years of his life, when there was considerable dispute over plans to open a heavy-metals mine in the Gimbat region. He was probably born in the early 1930s, and he died in 1996.

He was of a clan called Wurrkbarbar, to which Sandy Barraway and Nipper Daypilama Brown also belonged. Sandy and Peter were half-brothers (same mother, different fathers), and Nipper was Peter’s father’s brother.
Photograph 3. Sandy Barraway in a cave in Gimbat (1982) [Francesca Merlan]

Photograph 4. Nipper Daypilama Brown (Goodparla, 1991) [Francesca Merlan]
Peter always spoke of his early life in terms of being with his father at all the places his father worked. One of those was Malngarri, called Goodparla Station in English, not far from Gimbat. There were always some workers there from southern Arnhemland, Jawoyn, Mayali and Ngalkbon. There were also white headmen and stockmen, who peopled Peter’s memory and shaped his relationships to work, and to men white and black. Monty Sullivan was head stockman at Goodparla when Peter was a child. A Queenslander, a hard worker and independent, Monty left Goodparla and started his own station at Wotbunay, in Gimbat and the place where another of Peter’s half-brothers was born. Monty was nabaranggu “cheeky” (in other words, “dangerous”), said Peter, and he and his Aboriginal workers sometimes came to blows. But Peter also admired Monty as smart and entrepreneurial. Monty also mined tin at Maranboy, where many Aborigines from southern Arnhemland gathered.

Peter’s father worked there, and also at Yeuralba wolfram mine not far away, Moline, Burrundie, Mt. Mason, generally in the Pine Creek area and other mines in the region north and east of Katherine.

Seeing whites and Aboriginal people, including his father, mine, and participating in the hard and topsy-turvy life around these mine-sites, was a large part of Peter’s early life.

When he was still a young child, he and other relatives from the Gimbat area spent time around the peanut farms near Katherine. When the War came, and Katherine was bombed in 1942, they all travelled up the Katherine River, thinking themselves safer out bush and still able to survive handily there in country they knew well.

After the War, efforts were made to get Peter to go (as many others did) to what was then called Bamyili (today Barunga), a community formed 60 km east of Katherine in 1951. But he disliked the regimen, the institutionalized communal dining – he summarized his objections in complaining of the “balloon bread”– and many other aspects of that life, and walked away, back to Pine Creek and the farms near Katherine.

Welfare tried to find work for Aboriginal men in the 1950s and 1960s. Peter was placed with other cattlemen, droving horses and cattle to and from Queensland; and west and north of Katherine, at Newry Station, Stapleton, Bonrook, on the Edith River and elsewhere. In most of these places he was joined by close relatives, like his cousin Roy Anderson, Roy’s father naBokderen, Peter’s father’s brother (thus, Peter’s “father”) Nipper, and other countrymen.
While at the Edith River Peter and Julie Williams began married life together. She had first been promised to his half-brother, but he, seeing they liked each other, generously let them be together: “No fight”, as Julie said.

Julie was born in 1942 at the Army compound on the Cullen River. Her (step-)father Fortymile, who grew her up, was well-known around Katherine town. (Her biological father, Merengbet, was northern Jawoyn.) Fortymile’s country was at Wobilawun, Leech Lagoon, near the Barunga turn-off. Julie’s mother’s father, Nolgoyma, whom she knew as a young child (he died in 1951), was one of the group known as Dagoman, originary to the area of Katherine town and south of it. Thus Julie was linked to Katherine town, and also to Pine Creek, where her father worked for the railroad for a time. As a young girl she was sent to school at Bamyili. She had rejoined her family when she took up married life with Peter.

Peter and Julie lived around Katherine, and he spent periods of time away, mainly doing stockwork, while she did domestic work for people in town. They had four children and it was always Peter’s sorrow that the oldest, a boy, Tony, did not live long. Two daughters continue to live in the Katherine area today: Lorraine, and Rachel. The third, sadly, died in 2015.

When I first met Peter in 1976, he was working for the Katherine City Council as a rubbish collector. Together with them, and others of their extended family, we spent a great deal of time together. He and his family mainly lived at the Gorge Camp north of town where most residents were Jawoyn and Mayali. The out-of-town location gave Peter room to hunt, which he did regularly, supplying his family and the camp with meat and fish. They also occupied a house in town for a short time, for which he had applied, but this experiment in town living was not a success: too close to grog outlets and to drinkers looking for resources in town.
Because of his extensive knowledge of country, Peter, together with others of his close kindred, came to the fore as important witnesses in the Katherine Land Claim from the early 1980s, and the later claim over Gimbat Station in the 1990s. From the mid-1980s his brother Sandy, then living at Barunga, became concerned about mining exploration going on in their home country, Gimbat. Sandy, who had taken me in as a daughter when I first arrived at Barunga, began asking me to travel there with him. Peter began to accompany us. From then until federal cabinet’s rejection of the proposed mine at a proposed heavy metals mine at Coronation Hill in 1991, partly on grounds of its importance to Aboriginal people, Peter, Sandy and Nipper were caught up in inquiries, hearings and investigations.

Photograph 6. Peter Jatbula, Nipper Brown and Sandy Barraway (L. to R.)
[David Cooper ca. 1989]

They each carried this responsibility in different ways, but it took a toll on all of them. The three of them were identified most closely with this area by virtue of its being their clan country. Peter was the most overtly stalwart, or intransigent, of all, saying that his father would never have allowed mining at Coronation Hill, and neither would he. Sandy and Nipper sometimes appeared to give ground to the powerful forces demanding to know whether they would approve the mining or not, and at other times rejected the mine. In the end, when Cabinet determined not to allow the mine, the first one of them I saw was Nipper. He was the oldest of them, and the other two always regarded him, as their father, as having seniority. I saw that Nipper was quietly delighted. I fully understood then that he had, indeed, not wanted the mine to proceed: at one point he had shown me his mother’s bone bundle in the escarpment in the
vicinity of Coronation Hill, and I had observed to myself that that was a more significant act than anything he could have said.

With the mining dispute behind them, Peter’s and Sandy’s latter years were nevertheless turbulent. Peter and Julie split up, and both he and Sandy lived the hard-knocks life around Katherine. But Peter also spent long periods of time living out bush, at Werrenbun, where he could continue to hunt and fish. Many of the stories recorded here he had told me on many different occasions. But in April 1996 I overnighted at Werrenbun and asked him to make a consecutive recording of a number of them, which I later came to label “Peter’s last tape”, of the many recordings we had made. For the following day I returned to work I was doing at Delamere Station south of Katherine town, and late that night he was taken to hospital where he shortly died of the cancer that had been ravaging his body for some months. But on the day of the “last tape”, he was in good spirits, with family around, and as you will hear, he enjoyed recording the stories and reminiscences he had stored up from an active lifetime. He told kinds of stories – many picaresque, peopled with ghosts and devils and companions reflecting the kind of life he himself had lived – that I think are no longer told in those styles by the countrymen he left behind.

Photograph 7. Francesca Merlan with (from left) Dick Gararr (Peter and Sandy’s half-brother), Peter Jatbula and Sandy Barraway (Katherine 1982) [Alan Rumsey]
Phyllis Wiynjorrotj

Photograph 8. Phyllis Wiynjorrotj in her youth with her daughter Lynette
[A.P. Elkin, Army Camp 1940s, Elkin Archives, Sydney University]

Phyllis was a central personality at Barunga from the time I first went there in 1976. When I first arrived, her brother Gordon was Chairman of the (then Bamyili) Town Council. With his death less than two years later, Phyllis was recognized in many ways as the chief representative of her extended family, and as the pivotal person of her Jawoyn clan, Bagala, recognized as landholders of Barunga, Beswick and Maranboy areas.

As her stories show, Phyllis’ father Charlie Lamjorrotj was the central Jawoyn “headman” recognized as such by authorities during the Wartime and afterwards during the founding of Bamyili in the early 1950s. His father, Phyllis’ paternal grandfather Bamjuga, was a mail-carrier and also a known personality in this area, but Phyllis’ story makes it clear that he originated from further away, near or to the west of Pine Creek. (Phyllis still maintained these family connections, and together she and I visited some of her father’s-side relatives in Pine Creek into the early 1980s). For Phyllis and Bagala clan, Melkjarlumbu (Beswick Falls) is the key site of their dreaming, Goymarr (crocodile).

Phyllis’ mother, Laurie Galkjorrotj, was Worawurri (clan). Their main dreaming was sugarbag, from Jurlkbarrambumun on the Chambers River. Phyllis and I visited this place, where she showed me submerged rocks which are the sugarbag dreaming of this place in the water. She explains in her story Jurlkbarrambumun that people used to clean those rocks, but that nobody has done that for a long time. Laurie’s language was Jawoyn, and she also spoke Yangman fluently. Phyllis mother’s father had had two wives, one of them from the Elsey Station area. Phyllis’ father had a second wife, Violet, who was Rembarrnga. All these connections through her two mothers, and
mother’s father, to her father’s more distant relatives in Pine Creek, and others, were actively maintained by Phyllis during her lifetime.

Photograph 9. Phyllis Wiynjorrotj, Julie Williams and Rita Scott at Dorriya Gudaluk near Barunga, Katherine Land Claim, 1982 [Francesca Merlan]

Phyllis was already widowed when I got to know her, but she always lived in the heart of her family at Barunga, with her own children and grandchildren, her brother’s family, and many other relatives around her who remain a core group at Barunga.
Phyllis was a staunch supporter of my documentation of Jawoyn language over many years, and one of the most tireless workers. Countless days we spent moving around seeking shade at Barunga and continuing our recording, checking, working with other people, fishing, foraging, going to ceremony, and many other things. Phyllis was also a staunch supporter of Law, or as she sometimes used to say, of “rule”. Yet, as her stories show, her attitudes were ambivalent. She recognized the old times as violent and “hard” (*bolk-wirlangwirlang*). To that extent, people’s becoming “citizens” has been characterized by life becoming less hard. But, she often complains, people have lost their direction and, she alleges numerous times in these stories, become whitefellas. Phyllis was a strong, continuing critic of drinking and thoughtless behavior; an advocate of doing things that were good and a help to others. She was a moralist. I always felt fortunate that she thought helping me was a good thing to do, and I in turn have always wanted to make sure that some of what she wanted to put on record is made available to her family coming after her.
Sarah Flora Nyaluk

Sarah Flora’s Aboriginal name was Nyaluk. One of her English surnames, Flora, derived from her having lived and worked for market gardeners with her growing family on the Flora River east of Katherine. In doing this she had gained and retained what seemed to me to be the richest knowledge of the Flora River system among her contemporaries. Also regularly known by another English surname, Andrews, Sarah was one of the most knowledgeable, influential and impressive of older Jawoyn women I was privileged to know around Katherine and Barunga.

Sarah had grown up around Maranboy, and (during the War) near Mataranka, and shared long stretches of her life’s experiences with Phyllis Wiynjorrotj and Fanny Birlamjam, including spending time with them and others on the peanut farms around Katherine. It was with her husband, a man of Derkorlo clan named naBerrakbat (English name, George), that she and her family lived and worked for long periods for a farm on the King River. From there they would walk the wagon trail to Katherine, and the road to Maranboy. Later with her husband she also lived near Katherine hospital, where he worked for the Flying Doctor, Clyde Fenton (and was therefore known as “Fenton George”). When I first knew her she was living at Barunga, but she moved to

Photograph 11. Sarah Flora digging for yams (1991) [Francesca Merlan]
Rockhole near Katherine for the last ten years or so of her life. She had three children – Andy, Captain, and Mildred – and from them, grandchildren, many of whom were often around her place, and for whom she was a central personality.

Sarah was Phyllis’ (socially) close “sister” and a person upon whom she relied for company and support, given the place in the foreground that Phyllis had to occupy at Barunga after her brother’s death. They saw each other less often after Sarah moved from Barunga to Katherine. But they were always appointed to boards and committees together from the 1980s onwards.

Sarah’s clan was Girrimbitjba, of which she was the last member. She was proud of her dreaming heritage on the Mainoru River, and we visited the area of her (and Fanny’s) Emu sites on two occasions. Her knowledge of country around Katherine, Pine Creek, King River, Maranboy, Bamyili and her father’s country near Mainoru was wide-ranging and multi-dimensional. She had a magisterial grasp of dreamings and their tracks through much of this area. She was an exceptional bushwoman and forager. Like most others of her age and regional background, she spoke Jawoyn, Mayali and Ngalkbon fluently.

She was also an impressive and painstaking craftswoman. Especially while she was still living at Barunga, she would gather plants and colors. She fashioned traditional items of clothing and adornment, explaining to me that she had learned a good deal of this from her grandmother: “I would sit and watch her”.

Finally, she had a powerful knowledge of people in southern Arnhemland. She was a fluent and interesting speaker and narrator, of retentive memory and appealing, sometimes also mercurial, personality. Her repertoire is only represented here in a small way, although a second volume is planned in which she and several others will figure as main personalities with their particular perspectives.
This is a story that older people told in many versions, about Jeywunay, a place in Gimbat Station with a striking rock outcrop near a billabong. Fanny also refers to other important places in the region, Gupuluk and Guynjangnekyay.

A boy was crying and crying at Jeywunay and would not stop. (Other versions sometimes made it clear what he was crying for: he wanted a woman). Rainbow serpent heard him and came crawling along, and swallowed the boy and other people at Jeywunay. Bongukjeyn, Fanny says, “it ate them.” Then it vomited them up, creating the rock outcrop.
In the last part of her story she talks about wirriwirriyak “cuckoo shrike” as the gunwelang “right man” who “watered people’s eyes” and made it possible for us to see and go about, and gave people language, and even put all our bodily functions in place.

All parts of this story have further meanings, but here Fanny sketches the significance of the place, Jeywunay, that people can know about.

This was recorded by Fanny at Barunga in 1984. Fanny was talking to me and Winnie Barraway, who can be heard making a few comments. Winnie was playing a song tape which can also be heard in the background.

niyarnbay dongmiyanaaaay all right
nawarnbay bolung nay
He was there crying all right, he saw that rainbow.

Jeywunay na
(At) Jeywunay.

Jeywunay narnbay Gupuluk
nyirriyinjuyung Guynjangnekay
Jeywunay, we call that Gupuluk, Guynjangnekay.

gun’ba narnbay layn gajapjiyi bat
gaborayongnanan
(From there) that tree, and rock, stand looking at the water.

niyarnbay welangmalkji
nyadakgortmunjyn
There he speared it, and we became cut off.

niyarnbay mam bongukjeyn
That devil ate them.

wang bererengayang e e e eee jungay
nawarnbay Jeywunay niwula
nyarranggurlunglu
“Aaah! Aaah!” he went, that Jeywunay here on our land.

angarlarrberndak gaburruyu ye! Gupuluk
nyirriyinjuyung niyarnbay, Guynjangnekay, Jeywunay
A big river is there, boy! We call it Gupuluk there, Guynjangnekay, Jeywunay.

brerku nganberndak nabay
No good (it’s dangerous), it’s big there.

Jeywunay buwelannggarrawukangay
niyarnbay ngay’milakwonay na nawarnbay
nawalkwalk
They took corroboree to Jeywunay, there the child was crying.

ngayeyarri gun gen ngayewonang
warnbayangay
He kept crawling west, no east.

warndongmay nawarnbay nawalkwalk
That child was still crying.

niyarnbay welanggukjeyn bongukjeyn
na ga’garmuyuk
bonlerrmungbuyiyn na
There it ate them, old people and all.

He took them away altogether now.
warda nawarnbay ngey'may na, yenang wurrabay wirriwirriyak wakwak
Well, it was crying, what’s it, Cuckoo and Crow.

bumungguyni
They were people.

buyamaaaay nothing ngeya nagunwelang nalefhande left-handni ngeya wirriwirriyak
They threw spears, nothing, the “right” man was what’s it, Cuckoo was left-handed.

Winnie: naJawoyn ni
He was Jawoyn.

naJawoyn nawarnbay wirriwirriyak warngolpmiwum
The cuckoo was Jawoyn. He hooked his spear into the woomera.

ngarrayinay no more nawalkwalk thatun naberdak nangurniwo nangurniwo nangurniwo warngukjaywayn
It got angry; it was not small, but a very, very big one (the Rainbow Serpent) that kept on eating them.

nawarnbay wirriwirriyak ngeya mi lawk narnbay mi dakyamayn na finish
As it ate them, that cuckoo took what's it, took a stone-tipped spear and speared its rear, that’s all!

bonwelangdumditjbum ngayiman darra bolkitdijbum nawarnbay wirriwirriyak
He watered all their eyes and also the ground, that Cuckoo.

nyawelang ... toilet' nyanggemonayindin anything
We can see each other now.

nyanggag'ngan.gan bushmut
We go around in the bush.

nawarnbay nyan.garrawoy na narnbay
He gave us language/song, that one.

gurnjin nyanggorrkburayinwayn nyawarngangaywayn wanyaynjoyiyn
Today we go about, and we die.

narnbay nawirriwirriyak nen ngulukmakwoy
That cuckoo made breath (made things as they are).

Wanbala
One (he was the one who did all this).

Warnyamayn, nyawelangwutnawutmamar nyawelangwora’worayang anything, gurnjinwayn nyandakgorimuynjlyn
He speared, and we shit and urinate and (do) whatever, since we became the way we are now.

1 FB says we become human, and urinate and defecate.
**Emu - Fanny Birlamjam**

[Audio: 2 FB Emu]

Fanny Birlamjam here tells a version of the same (Emu) story that Peter Jatbula does (see ‘The Birds’ Revolt’ story), with a few variations. Her story features the song that the old woman sings as she prepares food and pounds yams: *bunggurldij bunggurldij* (Emu song), she sings—keeping her assembled companions from the food. Emu is a stingy old lady!

In Fanny’s version, crack hunter *wirriwirriyak* cuckoo is called in. Fanny mentions that he was *gamarrang* skin, and Jawoyn, and he had a sore foot. He kills a kangaroo, and the old lady’s companions say, “This is ours! You don’t give us any tucker!” In this version it is the old woman herself who walks a long distance to collect *munmun*, a kind of soft grass used as a honey sop.

As she goes, she calls back to the crowd: “Shall I collect the grass here?” They answer, “No, go further!” telling her that she hasn’t gone far enough, “Go to Gumberriyn!” and that dogs have pissed on the grass where she is so it is no good, and so on.

She comes back happy that she has gotten the grass. But she finds the revolt in progress, with her companions, and especially little quail, taking and hiding the pieces of meat, and eventually taking off into the air with them “like an airplane”. The old woman of the story turns into Emu as she rams tucker down her throat. In her anger at what has happened she runs all the way to Wetji Gorowarr and Gangulukngan.garwayn, two emu dreaming places on the Mainoru River, key places in Fanny’s own country. The second place-name means “where the heart talks,” and refers to Emu’s pulsing heart.

Fanny sympathises with the old woman, saying “poor thing!” as she tells the story. Fanny often said of herself, *Ngarrk ngalDurrrk* “I am Emu,” because of her connection to emu places.

Winnie Barraway makes a few comments as Fanny tells the story, including telling her at one point that she’s got it wrong! After the story, Fanny commented: All your uncles (to FM, that is, her father’s family) have died, I don’t go there (to Gorowarr) now.

*bunggurldij bunggurldij bunggurldij bunggurldij* 
Pound-pound sound.

*bunggurldij bunggurldij* 
“*Bunggurldij bunggurldij*” (Emu song).

*bura war'mi that much wurrk lerr'mayn* 
She loaded up yam, and lit a fire.

*All right bura bigukburray, ngoluy na nawarnbay bura* 
Her yam was lying there, ok, she cooked it now.
She put it, put it down, and she cooked and pounded now.

“Bunggurldij bunggurldij” (Emu song) “tucker yours, small ones eat them,” she said. [song by which she teases birds].

“Bunggurldij bunggurldij pound-pound sound (Emu song) small ones your tucker eat!” She ate it right before their eyes!

All right, that cuckoo, he was gamarrang (skin), Jawoyn.

He had a sore foot, here.

That again, “bunggurldij bunggurldij” (Emu song), and she ate it before their eyes! Oh! He went now, sugar cane grass.

Old fashioned sugar cane grass.

Marrk grass.

He went now, and sucked sugar cane grass.

He sucked on it, and saw a kangaroo.

He was foot-sore, he was limping, now again that cro- what’s it, cuckoo.

He was limping, all right, he was looking at its temple, it was sitting quiet.

“Hey! This is the temple of a kangaroo,” he said.

He goes back, he’s still limping, he got his spear at his camp.
Then, “bunggurldij bunggurldij” (Emu song) small ones, your tucker, gulp!” she ate it.

“Quick, I've seen a kangaroo,” he said.

He got his spear and got ready, foot-sore and lame.

As his foot swelled, he got his wooden spear ready.

Not his wooden spear, his bamboo spear.

He readied it, put his stone-tip, there was no shovel spear, only stone-tipped.

He readied it, all right, he tied it on.

He put wax, he did what’s it, with the wax now.

He catches him up, he was limping, he caught up to him, limping.

He was still limping, I left it here, the kangaroo presents itself to him (lit. the kangaroo’s temple is there).

He what’s it now, he snuck up, he kept sneaking up, and got close to the kangaroo.

He snuck up, he hid behind a tree, as for him, that kangaroo was still stuffing itself.

He speared it now! Finished! and he speared it, and down it fell, that kangaroo.

He tries going back. The kids were playing and sucking sugar cane grass, like a sugar cane.

They went back, he was still limping, he told them (about the kangaroo), they got to the body and they took it.
That old lady was watching us, “let’s cook it,” he said.

They went to it, lifted it, they brought it back to her, she was still eating and pounding, “bunggurldij bunggurldij” (Emu song). She ate it all up right before their eyes, they brought the (kangaroo) body back now.

She looked at the body, “hey! it’s ours, you didn’t give us any yam.”

They got stones, and firewood, they half-cooked it.

They got guts, liver, lungs, they got them, they kept on cooking it, they roasted it.

She kept on pounding, water lily, uh, black plum.

That one.

Maybe I forgot. ²

She got to here, “here, maybe?” she said.

“Keep going and get it.”

“Here maybe?” she said.

“No, there is no good, it’s a place dogs have pissed on.”

Dingoes.

She refused them, Emu.

What’s it, soft grass.

She kept going, “here maybe?” she said.

“Not yet, keep going!”

² Here Fanny is responding to Winnie saying, “you’re wrong!”
Dingo, it’s not a good place, it pissed on the grass, what’s it the munmun grass.

She kept going, “here maybe?”

“You know? There at Gumberriyn you get the grass.”

“You get that what’s it, munmun grass.”

They said, they cooked, they kept cutting it up and putting it by.

Another mob went ahead to camp, as for quail now, he carried its tail.

He carried the hind quarter, he hid it,

In the leaves.

In the leaves, quail.

She was coming back. She was happy with the grass.

She was coming back. She was coming along happily from there.

I feel sorry for her!

She kept on going, “they should be altogether,” she said.

The flies flew up now.

“Yes! That’s it! They've kept it from me!”

They were still talking to that quail.

“Jirrirtiii,” the quail said in the leaves.

The quail said.

“And lifted up the leaves.

He lifted up the leaves on his ground oven.
The quail said, quail opened it up, the back part, from one side he took off just like a plane.

He carried the hind part and the back.

Only she tore the back a little bit.

Emu got really mad…her digging stick.

She got her digging stick.

She got her digging stick and gulp!

She poked it down her chest.

And she also poked down that yam, she poked herself.

The yam is that emu’s feathers.

She got really angry and ran all the way to our (exc.) place and put herself there.

To my place, there what they call Wetji Gorowarr, Where its heart talks (place-name on the Mainoru River, an emu dreaming).
Hunting echidna - Peter Jatbula

[Audio: 3 PJ Hunting echidna]

In this story Peter Jatbula talks about how he (often with his wife Julie) used to eke out a living in the country within reach of Katherine and its farms, with their older Aboriginal countrymen, partly funded by the pension money they would get every so often.

The taxi man was important to their adapted life-style, as Peter says. The taxi man would think about the Aboriginal pensioners when it was time for pensions to be paid out. He’d meet them at the Two Mile Creek north of the township and bring them into town. They’d load up food, grog and other things, and he would drop them off again. They would walk into the country north of town, into its water sources and higher hunting grounds, and stay there camping, hunting, fishing, and drinking in the periods between pension pay-outs.

Peter hunted on a lot of these expeditions with a rifle he says his in-laws bought for him. He is probably talking about the 1960s, especially the later part of the decade. The hey-day of the peanut farms was over; and in any case, these were “old people” who had pension entitlements. Periodically, as in this telling, Peter would leave the old people to their life between Katherine and outlying country, and would go off to do stock-work.

In this story Peter mentions many places that were still well known to older Aboriginal people when I got to know them in the later 1970s - Womayn [a waterhole north of Katherine that people used to walk to from Nixon’s and Bruce’s farms], Mayawar, Barndiyay, Ngukgetjang, Yamitjmi, Gurngurnbam. Their collective use of these places continued into the 1970s. Yamitjmi had been the site of an Army camp during World War II.

He also mentions his boon companions: one of the people he talks about, but does not name or otherwise identify immediately, and then only by his skin-name (ngarritj), was Shorty Jarlung, one of Peter’s favourite old-timers. Shorty was a northern Jawoyn man, and was one of Peter’s authorities concerning country. They spent a lot of time camping together with other people. (Both Sandy and Peter, often with me in tow, continued to visit him into his old age, when he was living in old folks’ homes in Katherine. But this was somewhat against his will, and we watched him “break out” a number of times and return to the country he knew north of town, once or twice on the back of my truck).
Peter also mentions other companions: Balikburrott – whose English name was Charlie Barramundi; Yembeyembe – Peter Mitchell; and Marnakorlorlo – Alice Mitchell. Peter names them, but typically, says that by doing so he is “swearing” them – this is the Kriol word people use for disrespecting the dead. But here Peter draws
attention to the unusual calling of their names, which he does in their memory and with affection. The latter two, Peter and Alice, were living in the Katherine Gorge camp when I first got to Katherine, together with the widow of Charlie Barramundi, Topsy Mandawma. Through them I got a sense of this life-on-the-edge-of-town, and together we continued to walk into the surrounding country on many occasions, sometimes camping out in the high country and cutting didgeridoos which they would decorate for sale.

_Womaynmut nyirrimburroy Womayn_ We camped at Womayn.

_niyarnbay gowarrang nyirrileymay ngayu bala ngekwanay_ We looked for echidna, but he went around at night himself.

_ngekwanay bunay nayukjirriyn nganjirriyn_ He went around at night and killed one.

_waruk guwarrk garriyay ngayu_ Only him, he had a dog.

-ngarrk ngawarukmiynni I had no dog.

_guklerrkoynay ngekmarrk dirlimadirlmay bala_ He brought it back late at night, it was getting light.

_Najirriyngu_ One.

_Ngabatjbu’batjbunay burroy_ I pulled out the quills and he went to sleep.

_Ngayimarden_ Himself.

_ngabibatjbunay ngangukmangay_ I plucked the quills for him, I took out the guts.

_buy ngalangay_ I filled it with stones.

_Ngangolungay_ I cooked it.

_Bornanay_ It cooked.

_bornaying ngajungay_ “It’s done”, I said.

_dingarritj buy! ngajungay_ “Di-ngarritj (skin-name), hey!” I said.
We made it up for ourselves, we each ate a portion.

Only him, with the chest too, he had a lot of dogs, he had a lot of dogs, he made a damper (for) the dogs.

We ate, that’s it.

Like we were camped, there’s no meat here.

“Let’s you and I go to a new place a long way away.”

Right over there we shifted, to Mayawar.

“Let’s get to water, (with) fish and nailfish and all.”

“Yes.”

We went to Barndiyay.

He went, “let’s us camp here.”

“Yes.”

He pulled out a small nailfish, boiled it up.

We guzzled, we cooked damper (till) we were full.

We had flour.

And rice.

No, when he got his pension.
No, I wasn’t getting the dole yet.

We ate there ...

“Let's us go back for (your) pension.”

In the morning was pension (time), yes.

We went back to camp.

Ngukgetjang

Many nights (long time). ³

Every two weeks (roughly ten days).

There at Ngukgetjang.

Yes, just there at Ngukgetjang they got food.

Pension.

They loaded up

Well, the taxi would meet them.

The taxi man remembered.

“Oh! when do I get the pensioners,” he’d say.

He got them at Two Mile Creek.

He got them there, brought them back to town.

³ This clause was in response to question: “did you get money every two weeks?”
They loaded up food, grog and all, and brought it back.

I waited for them there on the road.

Balikburront, Yembeyembe, Marnakorlorlo (names).

Oops! They’ve all died, poor things.

I’m just (saying the names of the dead) blaspheming.

They got their food and took it back.

We camped there upriver, we took it upriver.

Oops, we camped far off at Ngukgetjang.

We camped there.

Now they got drunk, ok.

Let's all go for kangaroo, on top.

We looked for kangaroo, pow!

We shot it.

Me, I shot it.

Julie's mother had bought me a rifle.

No, that other old man.

Mick Stevens.

Her father?

[said by FM]
yowoyn najartngayu

nganbibayim'may laywu jungay

Nabay lay ngabimalkjangay
ngabilerrkoyinay whole lot

soup soup makwonay nit nit lawa

damba nabay curry nabay
lerrwolipunay potato and onion and
yeko

narnbay jay

warnjaaay denbamborr' jungay
lawurrk burro'burroy wiyn'

Yowoyn

niyarnbay darra waykan
nyirriwol'mangay

ngeyamut Yamitjmimut

yo Yamitjmi gun nyanggan
galwan.gu

nyirriyukley'leymay Gurngurnbam
nyirrimburroy

Yamitjmi nyirrimbolkwongay
jarn.gil buwar'warmangay
niyarnbay

fijiline gok bumangay

jurrung Gurngurnbam
nyirringgangay

niyarnbay nyirrimburroy

Yes, her father.

He bought it for me, for kangaroo, he said.

I killed kangaroo for him and brought back the lot.

He made soup and put in flour.

Damper, curry he polished it off, potatoes and onion and all!

He ate that.

Kept eating till full up and slept like that.

Yes.

We also used to climb on top.

On what’s it, Yamitjmi.

Yes, let’s go there to Yamitjmi for goanna.

We looked (for game) and camped at Gurngurnbam.

We left Yamitjmi, they loaded up turtle there.

They got (them) with fishing lines.

We went upstream to Gurngurnbam.

We camped there.
nyirriynjay that un better pensioner
bulakwonay

We ate there, they could get their pensions better.

bungurukngurukniyay
bulakwolakwonay

They were quick about it, they got it.

bonyi nyirringga’ngan.gan

“Now we’ll keep going.”

ngekarrawul nyirringgoyin
buynjungay

“We’ll come back in the morning,” they said.

yowoyn .. wak numbornabiwayn
wanyanbi.[gorrkbu?].. ngajungay

“Yes when you drink grog, you [save?] some for me,” I said.

bulakwonay burndronkmay
niyarnbay roadluk

They got it, they went drunk there in the road.

naYembeyembe waywo

Yembeyembe and all? Mandawma? [said by FM]

yowoyn narnbay makmak
naBalikburrtormakmak

Yes, that mob, Balikburrt mob.

bumbornabiay nalawurrk
bunggoyinay nadrunken one

They drank and went home full up, drunk.

bunggoyinay you know halfshot
bunggoyinay

They went home, you know half-shot, they went home.

buwarn bam ngeyay
bumbamwurrmay

They still what’s it, they had headache.

lay nyaynjanggan buynjungay

“Let’s hunt kangaroo,” they said.

wanyunwarr’may  grog ?

(When) you get over grog.

ngawonbimalkjangay buynjay

I shot it for them, they ate.

Geyarrri  yunggay waykanba

Ahead that way from on top.

ngalugoyin Mondurrngdurrgmut

I’ll go back there to Mondurrngdurrg.
“Let’s go back to Mondurrngdurrrng from nearby, pension (time),” they said.

Ok.

“We went back and camped there.

They got nailfish now.

They loaded it up

They boiled soup.

They put curry.

Oh Christ! that curry.

They ate till full.

Slept, he shoots, pow! its bones too.

They ate (bones and all) poor thing, nailfish and all.

From there.

I left them.

I was contracting.

Kenny Bius.

I went to work.

I worked (at) what's it.

Manyala.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Warrimoo Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract (work).</td>
<td>ngawonyukwongayn altogether na there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I left them there for good.</td>
<td>buynjoyoyinay mijalp na jijwarr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They died by themselves poor things.</td>
<td>grog too much flagon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where they got too much flagon.</td>
<td>bumangaywayn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hunger - Peter Jatbula

This is another of Peter’s hunting stories, a recollection from his boyhood. This time he was with his father. They were at Gunbulwernbern, where there’s a billabong, looking around for game. They found nothing, but they eventually speared a feral cat, cooked and ate it.

“Let’s go to Yatjawerlngberlng,” said his father – he knew there were big yams there, near a billabong. They went there and dug some out, put them to one side, and eventually they wrapped the good ones and put them into a roasting pit. At night Peter heard movements and noises; his father launched a spear and may have hit a bull. Hearing chomping noises in the night, Peter thought it was a devil eating the yams, but his father called out, “It’s me, son.” Clearly food often was thought to attract devils, but in this now partly pastoral landscape, other creatures were wandering too.

In the morning they ate yams and kept looking for game, kangaroo. Finding nothing, they went on to Gunworrporl, where the yams were also good. Slim Martin, a stockman, came upon them there. There were also some countrymen who’d come up from the Edith River. “Did you get any game?” they asked Peter and his father. “No, only yams.”

Slim supplied some horses and got them to try catching brumbies for him – that was one of the ways he made a living. In the next few minutes Peter goes on to tell how he worked at Goodparla, another station in the area, for Old Harry Hardy, with several of his countrymen.

This was the sort of story Peter often told about his father, and the experiences they had travelling together, meeting known countrymen and also known whitefellas who worked these pastoral fringes and mining camps.

Niyarnbay ngeya nyirimburroy
Gunbulwernbern

niyarnbay lerr nyirimburroy
nilanggaberndak

marak nyirriynjanggangay nyigan jart
yowoyn madak juy

nyirriynjaggga'janggangay
nyirriborokley'may wang waywo buligi
buffalo wakay wangmiyn

nyirringga'nganaaay yo

pujigat madak nawula

yo yama narnbay nyijar

We camped there at what’s it,
Gunbulwernbern.

We camped at that place, at a big
billabong.

We were always hunting, “Let’s go,
Dad.” “Yes son,” he said.

We hunted and hunted, we look for the
tracks of game of all kinds, cattle,
buffalo, nothing, no game.

We weevent .... yes.

“Here’s a cat, son.”

“Yes, kill that, let’s eat it.”
We were starving. Pow! We killed the cat.

We ate it, drank water and we were full up.

Our bones got strong (i.e. we felt stronger).

We kept on going, we look for animal tracks and kangaroo tracks and all, nothing.

The sun set now, the sun was over in the west.

“Yes, now let’s get big yams at Yatjawerlingberng, come on!”

We weent, there is water, there is a billabong.

“Yes, let’s sleep in the sand, Dad.”

Yes, we dug there.

This one is cheeky (i.e. the yam), bury it, and we kept on, and we checked the cheekiness of another, “yes, it’s ok,” and we put that to one side.

We buried the cheeky one.

And again when we got one, and there was a good one, we put it to one side.

We kept putting them, the good ones, “enough, ok.”

“That's enough, Dad, the sun might go down, we’ll roast it, ok!”

We dug a hole in the sand, and we got paperbark.

We put stones, we roasted it, we put the yams aside.
We roasted it, we slept now.

I was worn out, because I was sore. The sun had hit me because it was burning hot, and also in the hot time we'd burned our feet.

“Yes, Dad, a devil yonder is what’s it, catching up to us.”

Yes, we heard, “mmmm!”

Devil! Devil! Yes a bull was coming to water.

“Yes, now we'll spear it from this way and that way.”

He speared it in the ribs, maybe, like this, slam!

“Hey! That animal’s run off, yes!”

“Leave it! cuz, it’s night-time.”

He was alone that animal.

I slept, I was sore, as for him, he got up, the moon was rising this way.

He opened it (the ground oven), maybe he was really hungry, he opened it and was eating, yeah.

“Whhhwhhh,” he went.

Over here, I caught of it, “wowwow, that’s a devil,” I said

“No, it’s me, son,” he said

Yes, and he nearly ran away with the tucker.

He was noshing away now in the middle of the night. “Tomorrow morning we’ll eat it.”

“Yes.”
Hunger

nyirrimburroongiyn darra early fella
nyirriynja'ngajay
buy

nyigoyin

maynyukley'ma darra wang
nyirriynjangganaywaiy laymiyn

namarri'marriyiyn nyirriringgo'goyinay
arnbay nyirriringgorrkan'miyinay
nganditjkan.gu

nyirringgoyiyn jawurritj

yeko wang nuyamay?

wakay wangiyn

yo mayyek nyirriynjany nganditjkan.guyek
ngeya Yatjawerlningberling
yo

niyarnbay darra bulakwolakwoy
Gunwurrporl burramarden darra
nganditjkan.gu niyarnbay buwar‘mangay

may guwarrk nabay naberndak nganmaku

nawula nabay darra ...

bulakwoy burramarden yo Gunwurrporl
nyilakwolakwon may niyarnbay

may guwarrk nawula berndak
naberndaberndak oh goodness can’t beat
im

narnbay darra burramakan may bulakwoy

niyarnbay naSlim Martin
nyanbijawurritjmayn

yo najamuyn nabarrakgolotok

gun’ba Edithba bungganay naGularri
makmak niyarngula

nangeya warnyuwoy lendo na old Jacko

We slept and early in the morning, we nibbled it.
“Let’s go!”

“Let’s go back.”

Try look for game, and when we were hunting, no game.

We went back really hungry and we were carrying those big yams.

We went back, came out.

“Hey! Did you spear any game?”

“No, no game.”

Yes, we only ate vegetable food, yams at what’s it, Yatjawerlningberling.
Yes.

They used to go there too to Gunwurrporl and load up big yams there.

“But that’s big tucker, good.”

And this too ...

They went there, as for them, “Yes, let’s go to Gunworrporl the tucker there.”

“Big, the tucker there is really big, oh goodness can’t beat it.”

And as for them, they’d get tucker there.

Slim Martin came out there to us.

Yes, and (my) grandfather Pigeon Hand.

They went from the Edith (River) there, Gularri mob.

What’s it, he gave (them) horses, old Jacko.
ninumbula gawotawayn jeng  
There yonder low down where his camp is.

bumaynma brumby  
“Try catching brumbies!”
Peter tells of something that happened when he and his countrymen were camping just north of Katherine town, and the Japanese bombed Katherine. (That occurred on 22 March 1942, after they had bombed Darwin earlier that day). Aboriginal people were camped in the limestone near the river, and heard the sounds of the bombers above. Flying rock and debris from the blast injured some people (and one Aboriginal man was killed).

Peter’s “brother” whom he calls na-Muruk as he was of Muruk (clan), sustained a serious facial injury. Na-Muruk dived into the water at Knott’s Crossing near Katherine – but came out in the waterhole in the high country north of Katherine, at Mayawar. The water there is considered japurr “sacred”. “He had a rainbow,” says Peter, meaning that na-Muruk was a “clever” or “doctor”. That is why he could go underground in the river and come out at Mayawar. By the time he re-appeared at Knott’s Crossing, his face was healing. He went to the hospital (near Knott’s Crossing then as now) and got bandaged, “poor fella my old brother,” says Peter.

naMuruk
Muruk.

naMuruk yowoyn
Yes, Muruk.

bom dayn ‘mi this way, nawula ngorlkdayn ‘mi ngangngorlk
A bomb cut him here on the cheek.

niyarnbay nyirrimburroy bomwayn nyanbunay
We were camping there when the bomb hit us.

O wak wukayinay niyarnbay Knott’s Crossing na dipmay altogether
He was carried along by the water and went under completely at Knott’s crossing.

niyarnbay yi’meyn gun Mayawar
He got out there at Mayawar.

bolung gen Garrriyah darra nabay
Because he had a rainbow.

nagurang berndak ni narnbay
He was a big doctor.

poor fella my old brother
Poor fella my old brother.

gangay boru nibornajapurrur yi’meyn
He went, crossed over, got out in sacred water.

yi’meyn mekjoyinay warnmekniyay goy’goyinay Knott’s Crossing
He got out, his sores were healing, he still had cuts when he came back to Knott’s Crossing.
We were camping there, he got bandages, he went to hospital, and he healed a little bit.

Yes, from that bomb where it had cut him.

His cheek and all, poor thing.
This is a tale of a *mam* (devil, dead person) encounter, a sort of story Peter liked. Two men went hunting, killed a kangaroo, roasted and divided it. As they started back something started whistling at them! It’s an animal, they said. But after a few times, they looked and saw figures in the distance, one standing on one leg with the other propped, who told them to cross the creek to his side. They did that, and camped.

That night a devil attacked them and there was a big fight, and one of the men was speared. The devil took all their things – cockrags (loincloths), spears and the meat – and they had to make camp with nothing.

In the morning when they woke up they saw that the devil had left them a nice fresh female wallaby, and turtles, and new cockrags, and spears. They took all the things and kept travelling and came out (to a big mob of people) near the peanut farms at Katherine. “A devil belted us up,” they said.

The sun was there, in the west.

Yes, they saw a kangaroo, a single (sole) one.

Yes, spear him there, got behind a tree long way off.

It was di-ngarritj (skin-name).

“Yes, I'll spear him this way by and by”, he said.

He reached it this way, he speared it right then, yeeah! Your and my meat.

They were hungry.

“Yes here you go, you roast it, (it’s) a big one.”

Yes.

They roasted it, and already it was afternoon and the sun was going down, o, “let’s take it out and we'll cook it there.”

Yes.
They cut it in half, the spine and the head, he took it, half and half (each).

As for him (one man), he took the head, a half.

And as for him (the other man), the spine with what’s it, with the tail part, and the ribcage.

Ok.

“We’ll go back.”

He was going back, and a devil whistled at them.

Whiss! (whistling sound).

“What’s that whistling at you and me?”

“No, nothing that’s what’s it, an animal.”

Yes.

Again they went, and again it whistled at them.

“Nothing, that’s a man.”

They saw over there to the north, at the creek.

“Hey! this is me here!” he said.

Yes, yes, countrymen were standing up, and he was standing up with leg crossed over there.

With a spear.

Yes, they reached him now.
ngayewula boru bonjuy
“Cross over this way,” he said to them.

wakay nurrang bumboru juy narnbay mam
“No, you cross over,” the man said.

burrnggupmayn
It was dark now.

gaburrnggupma’gupmar now
It's getting dark now.

yo bumborungay bumburroy
buwarnborungay niyarnbay jop! bonmi
Yes, they crossed over, they camped, they crossed over and there grab! he got them.

ngayimarden jarr yama juy
As for him, he speared his leg.

yemboyi darra mam yamayn narnbay
mungguy yamayn yakay angangyameng
ganwarreboyameng buynjuy niyarnbay
And supposedly again the devil speared that man, he speared him, “ouch! he speared me, he's nearly speared me” [M], they said (there).

jorrkun narnbay winja laywaywo
bonlerribitbum gun namuya’muya
bunggoyiyn bunggoyinay lerlruk nakitpela
bumburroy nakitpela bunggoyiyn nabay
winja bonlerrmi whole lot
He (devil) took their cockrags and spears and meat from them, and they went back sick, they camped naked, they went back naked, he'd taken all their spears from them.

bunggoyiyn bumburroooy early fella
buyi’meyn gun mowe niyay 10 o’clock like
this time now
They went back and slept, they got up early, the sun was there (at) 10 o’clock like this time now.

yowoyn
Yes.

gurni gila gorrknyiwu
wakay
“Where in the world is our clothing?” nothing.
gula gakukwayamjiyi jarn.gil gorrkmuyuk winja bonbiwongayn
Over here turtles were lying around with clothes and spears he’d left for them.

nganbayirr bonbigukwongayn nagukgerrng
He’d left a female wallaby for them, a fresh one.4

ngayurlungba narnbay mam
From his things, that devil.

nabay berranggurlung nabay wukangay
And he’d taken theirs.

narnbay jorrkon bonbiwongayn winja jarn.gil bonbigukgotmay naworkle’workkle godiynmuyuk
He left them cockrags, spears, he put turtles for them, nice fat ones, along with a wallaby.

bayirr bala yembo ngalworkkle
The female wallaby, that’s supposed to be the fat one.

narnbay burnderrpma’derrpmayn mamgun nabay ngayurlung berranggurlung lay nabay wukangay
They roasted it that one from the devil, his one, he'd taken theirs.

niyarnbay darra bulakmilakminay gula nen Gajarran burndirn’mi buyern’mayn burndel’may namuya’muya
And they ran along this way and maybe came out at Katherine, they came out, they were afraid, they were limping, sick ones.

wanyinlerrbun darra buynjuy
“He might belt us up again,” they said.

Yowoyn
Yes.

gula nibalpmi buynjay mam nyabunay buynjuy
There in company, they ate it, “a devil belted us,” they said.

nibalpmi buynjawurritjmayn Gajarran binaltuk darra nibalpmi
They came out to a big mob at Katherine, there were lots of people at the peanut farms.

makboyn gila
Well that’s all!

4 guk = a fresh carcase (inan).
Spearing a Devil - Peter Jatbula

This is one of Peter Jatbula’s typical, picaresque stories about countrymen, their travels, experiences, and accomplishments.

An older Mayali man, his “brother”, decided to go back north from Pine Creek to see his wife. The weather was hot, it was rain time. He saw a crocodile crawling, and speared it. He camped, built a small bark humpy, lay down leg-up. He roasted the meat. Night was coming on, he heard noises: “NgorrngorrngorrMuu”. “A cow”, he thought. More noise: “Muu”. “No, a devil!” That devil had smelled the meat. (The word mam, translated here as ‘devil’, is used for the deceased, and other uncanny human-like creatures). “Hey, this is a lot”, the devil thought. And the devil started slurping away, eating the meat, lots of it. The man jumped up, hooked spear to woomera, thought he’d try to spear him – hit him, and frightened the devil away. But he was frightened himself – and took off, travelling at night, always worried the devil might come out again.

As usual, a track that the man followed emerges from the telling: he had camped and roasted at Borlarri, then went on to Malngarri, Jimjim, Mudginberry and finally came out at Gunbarlanya (Oenpelli), where he told the assembled camp of his experiences.

When he got to Gunbarlanya (Oenpelli), his wife (“my grandmother”, Peter notes) was there – she was called Ngalgepnganaparru (“Buffalo Nose” - Ngal-gep-nganaparru means “buffalo nose” in Mayali). He bragged about his adventures to the people gathered there, about how he’d speared a devil.

As usual when telling stories about his Mayali associates, Peter “voices” them in Mayali, in which he – and all his age-mates – were completely fluent.

ngare Pine Creekba juy “I’m going[^M] from Pine Creek”, he said.

this un my old brother jitjwarr he been haveim wife la ngeya Gunbarlanya

ngarrurndeng nguterre bawon wurle ngaberlyigan wo juy Mayaliwa “I’m going back, I’ll leave you for a while, I’m going to get my wife, yes[^M]”, he said in Mayali.

goy'goyinay Borlarri burrong juy He went back and camped at Borlarri.

ngekarrawul darra ngekbulkimyyn yembo warnburrongiyn In the morning, he went really early, and then camped again.

goymarr nay gabayang He saw a crocodile, it was crawling.

yo goymarr bonyi ngadaynbun nawula juy “Yes, now I’ll spear this crocodile”, he said.
gupa wirlmurr nen nabay garrpiyay
warndaynbunay gulpam daynbun

He had a wooden spear, maybe wire spear, he kept on spearing, and speared three.

gun mowe jungay

The sun was there.

three o’clock might be, yowoyn
derrpmaderrrpmay ngoy’miyn

Maybe three o’clock, yes.

jungalk gen gok
gamirrng’mirrngmamar darra
wakwaynlinay

Because it was exactly hot weather, that’s when it’s burning hot, and also when rain was falling.

dumyalwunay darra ngeya goyarr

And it was burning the eyes of the what’s it, the crocodile.

burro’burroy na, bartjapjapjiyay
lerrgapoyn ngeyawayn bumakwonay
gukal

He slept for a while, he had his knees crossed.

yowoyn niyarnbay bartjapjapjiyay
burro’burrong ngani nganay darra
nabay wang ngorrrngorrngorr
muumuu jungay

Yes, he had his leg up and was sleeping, and he heard something, that animal went,”ngorrrngorrngorr muumuu” (a cow noise).

yo nabay buligi

Yes, that’s a cow.

muu jungay yo nabay mam juy gun
nganmen

It went “muu”, “yes, that’s a devil”, he thought to himself.

biburtjanomay narnbay
ngolungaywyan ngeya derrpmay
ngongorrnggornorrng muu nabay
buligi jungay

It had smelled a smell, when he was cooking, what’s it, roasting.

“Ngongorrnggornorrng muu”, that was a cow, he said.

muuu darra jungay yo mam

It went “muuu”, “Yep! a devil.”

yangan gila jawurritjmayn
anarnbayan mu’mayn werr’werrmay
narnbay wang na

He’d come out a long time ago, and that’s when it went ’muuu’, and he took out that meat.

yowoyn werr’mayn buul

And he took it out, ready!

warnyongnanay darra nawula gula
jungay
bartjapjapjiyay yeko wang gila
nawula naberndak mam juy

He was watching (i.e. the devil was watching the man) and he (the man) was doing like this, he was leg up, hey, this is a lot of meat here, the devil said.
warnjaay lotmurrlotmurrlotmurr jay wolipu juy ngan.guway ngan.guway darra warnjay lotmurrlotmurrlotmurr wang gok gerrung warruwolipun yo wirrmurr nen ngadaynbun juy

He kept on eating, gobble gobble, he ate, and finished it, and another and another, and he ate again, gobble gobble. “They mustn’t finish off this meat, maybe I’ll spear him with a wire spear,” he said.

golpmuwwum gikanba niyarnbaywa nganmarnak nen daynbun yakay juy

He hooked spear to woomera and from there inside, maybe he speared its arms. And the devil said “Ow!”

lawurribun

The devil went mad.

nabay mungguy yi'yimeyn ngan.gun'yan darra ngarrkmi winjamuyuk

That man (frightened) got up, went around that way and came out with a spear.

nabarlayi lawurrribuyinay ngayimarden yern'milakminay darra

That one got a fright, and as for him (the man) he ran away in fright.

lakminay warnbayen nen numbuyn nen gok ngeya Malngarri burrongiyn

He ran then somewhere maybe that way what's it at Malngarri, he camped.

niyarbayen nen burrongiyn gorlodirlmayn bala nen ja ngekbaniyay

There maybe he camped, he got up early, maybe it was night-time.

nidirlmiwu bay nen lakminaywayn gikan yembo jurr'meyn

At daylight maybe is when he ran and he went down.

ngeya gurni wurra gabolknge

To what’s it, what's the name of the place.

niyarbay burrongiyn nen gojinen warnngekuwanaygukumarrkyek burroy

He slept there and maybe he kept on travelling at night and he just slept by day.

ngekbyiyn ananbay ganay

When it got dark, that’s when he went.

mam darra wanganbun jungay

“That devil might hit me again”, he said.

yern'mayn now anarnbayan

He was frightened then.

warnganaywayn dirn'mi ngeya Jimjim

When he kept going he came out at what’s it, Jimjim.

niyarbaywa darra warnyi'menay mungguymiyn niyay darra nibay gerrung warrumburroy

From there he got up, there were no people, they weren’t camping there.

warnGunbarlanyayek

Only at Gunbarlanya (Oenpelli).
warnganaywayn ngeya Majinbardi

And he kept on going to what’s it Mudginberri.

niyarnbaywu nen burroy

Maybe he camped there.

niyarnbay warnyi’menaywayn jawurritjmayn ngeya Gunbarlanya

And when he got up from there he came out at what’s it, Gunbarlanya.

namarnde nganbom ngagelelutmi juy

“A devil attacked me, I ran away scared,” [M] he said.

niyarnbay ngalmukangayu bibudiyay ngalmamam bala guwarrk

There his wife was sitting down, but (that was my) grandmother.

yowoyn Ngalgepanganaparru

Yes,  Ngalgepanganaparru (Buffalo Nose). [M]

niyarnbay jawurritjmayn nibalpmi

He came out there where a lot of people were.

namarnde ngan.gelegajungi ngarraynbigu mojarrika nganmarnenguni nganmarnayawun galuk ngandeka ngarraynbigu jungay Mayaliwa gun niyarnbay ngongongbuyinay

“The devil wanted to run me up, we killed crocodile, he wanted to eat mine, he left it for me, I killed it”, [M] he said in Mayali, there he was boasting.

yo gek buynjuy darra namalnguyn

“Yes, is that so (gek’[M]) they said, a lot of them.

boyn gila

That’s all.

ngare Pine Creekba juy

“I’m going[M] from Pine Creek”, he said.

this un my old brother jitiwarr he been haveim wife la ngeya Gunbarlanya

This one my old brother poor thing, he had a wife at what’s it, Oenpelli (Gunbarlanya).

ngarrurndeng nguherre bawon wurle ngaberlyigan wo juy Mayaliwa

“I’m going back, I’ll leave you for a while, I’m going to get my wife, yes[M]”, he said in Mayali.

goy’goyinay Borlarri burrong juy

He went back and camped at Borlarri.

ngekarravul darra ngekbulmiyn yembo warnburrongiyn

In the morning, he went really early, and then camped again.

goymarr nay gabayang

He saw a crocodile, it was crawling.

yo goymarr bonyi ngadaynbun nawula juy

“Yes, now I’ll spear this crocodile”, he said.
Spearing a Devil

He had a wooden spear, maybe wire spear, he kept on spearing, and speared three.

The sun was there.

Maybe three o’clock, yes.

Because it was exactly hot weather, that’s when it’s burning hot, and also when rain was falling.

And it was burning the eyes of the what’s it, the crocodile.

He slept for a while, he had his knees crossed.

He had an old-fashioned camp, they used to make stringybark humpies.

Yes, he had his leg up and was sleeping, and he heard something, that animal went, “ngorrngorrngorr muumu” (a cow noise).

Yes, that’s a cow.

It went “muu”, “yes, that’s a devil”, he thought to himself.

It had smelled a smell, when he was cooking, what’s it, roasting.

“YesNgongorrnggornorrng muu”, that was a cow, he said.

It went “muuu”, “Yep! a devil.”

He’d come out a long time ago, and that’s when it went ’muuu’, and he took out that meat.

And he took it out, ready!

He was watching (i.e. the devil was watching the man) and he (the man) was doing like this, he was leg up, hey, this is a lot of meat here, the devil said.
He kept on eating, gobble gobble, he ate, and finished it, and another and another, and he ate again, gobble gobble. “They mustn’t finish off this meat, maybe I’ll spear him with a wire spear,” he said.

He hooked spear to womera and from there inside, maybe he speared its arms. And the devil said “Ow!”

The devil went mad.

That man (frightened) got up, went around that way and came out with a spear.

That one got a fright, and as for him (the man) he ran away in fright.

He ran then somewhere maybe that way what's it at Malngarri, he camped.

There maybe he camped, he got up early, maybe it was night-time.

At daylight maybe is when he ran and he went down.

To what's it, what's the name of the place.

He slept there and maybe he kept on travelling at night and he just slept by day.

When it got dark, that’s when he went.

“He that devil might hit me again”, he said.

He was frightened then.

When he kept going he came out at what’s it, Jimjim.

From there he got up, there were no people, they weren’t camping there.

Only at Gunbarlanya (Oenpelli).
warnganaywayn ngeya Majinbardi And he kept on going to what’s it Mudginberri.
niyarnbaywu nen burroy Maybe he camped there.
niyarnbay warnyi’menaywayn jawurritjmayn ngeya Gunbarlanya And when he got up from there he came out at what’s it, Gunbarlanya.
namarnde nganbom ngagelelutmi juy “A devil attacked me, I ran away scared,” [M] he said.
niyarnbay ngalmukangayu bibudiyay ngalmamam bala guwarrk There his wife was sitting down, but (that was my) grandmother.
yowoyn Ngalgepnganaparru Yes, Ngalgepnganaparru (Buffalo Nose). [M]
niyarnbay jawurritjmayn nibalpmi He came out there where a lot of people were.

namarnde ngan.gelegajungi ngarraynbom mojarrki nganmarnenguni nganmarneyakwong galuk ngande ngarraynbom jungay Mayaliwa gun niyarnbay ngongongbuyinay “The devil wanted to run me up, we killed crocodile, he wanted to eat mine, he left it for me, I killed it”, [M] he said in Mayali, there he was boasting.

yo gek buynjuy darra namalnguyn “Yes, is that so (gek’[M]) they said, a lot of them.

boyn gila That’s all.
This is a story in two parts, or rather, one story that evolves into another. They seem to have been connected, even if loosely, because Peter told it more than once this way. The common motif between the two parts seems to be the fate of a pair of brothers.

A man goes hunting, and stalks a kangaroo that he wants to bring back for his brother. There were some black plum trees nearby and he went up into one and was eating plums. Some dingoes nearby attacked the man, pulled him down by his privates and laid him out; he was Mayali. Back in camp his brother was starting to wonder about him – but people said, “maybe he’s camped out, killed something, an emu or kangaroo, and stayed there.”

But he went and found his brother dead, as the dogs had left him. “I’ll go back and live with his wife now,” he thought. The woman had a child, and they all lived together.

One day they went hunting, saw what the wife thinks are freshwater crocodile tracks, and she urges her husband to get the crocodile for her. But he recognizes it as a saltwater, cheeky crocodile, and tries to resist her requests. She keeps urging him to get it, exulting “He and I’ll eat fat!”—imagining a nice fat catch.

He dives in with kurrajong rope and ties up the animal’s jaws. Everything seems to be going all right. But the croc rises to the surface, and gets the sun in its eyes. It gets really vicious, and grabs the man with its ferocious jaws. “It’s killed my husband,” says the woman.

The woman returns to camp with the turtles she had caught, crying, thinking that seeing the sun is what made the crocodile so vicious. “He should have covered its eyes,” she said.

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**najurlkan**

Dingoes.

**lay jangganay**

He was hunting kangaroo.

**lay jangga’jangganay**

He was hunting and hunting kangaroo.

**woyal buynjay narnbay waruk**

Those dogs were eating black plum.

**yo ngayamar narngula juy**

“Yes, I’ll spear this one,” he said.

**ngayamar ngabilerrkoyin.gu nababa juy**

“I’ll spear it. I want to bring it home for my brother,” he said.

**guwarrk Mayali niyay**

But he was Mayali.

**ngayame ngamarne gurla’yirrupkakun ngarduk gogok yembo jungay**

“I’ll spear it. I’ll bring the hide back for my brother,”[^1] he supposedly said.

**yuklakwolakwoy**

He caught up to it (the kangaroo).
jarrarla yembo bulklaying He only chucked that spear a short distance.

waruk nabay werl'buwerl buynjuj Those dogs were barking.

nganbengjang jirriyn niyay “Listen to me! One was there.”

gurni nabay “Where is that?”

woy gang worromboka juy yembo “Come on! Run it up!” he said.

lukuynlayn wol'mi jorlyirr' bumi waruk He nearly climbed the tree, they pulled him down by the balls, those dogs pulled him from all sides. They bit him and laid him out.

Yeko gukburroy na “Gosh!” He was lying there dead now.

gawarredurndeng gare bawam “He’ll come back, poor thing. Maybe he's gone?”

bayeyongiyn guyn gare ngurrurdu buynjungay “He camped, maybe kangaroo or emu,” they said.

bayeyongiyn guyn gare ngurrurdu buynjungay gare ngurrudu babom bayeyongiyn “He camped, maybe he killed a kangaroo or an emu and camped, they said.”

jarum najurlkan wayayn “I reckon a dingo bit him.”

buyukley'leymayn gen him brother They looked for him, no, his brother looked for him. His brother.

uykley'leymayn nababangayu

woyal nay niwula nen lurlkyamay woyalluk juy “He saw the black plum. Maybe here he speared him sneaking, in the black plum,” he said.

woyalmuyuk narnbay nay gagukburruyu warukwayn gukyirriyanganay darra With the black plum, he saw, he’s lying there dead, where the dogs had pulled his body too.

Ye ngarduk gogok yembo juy “Ay! my brother!” he supposedly said.

jamo nganmarnebayeng jungay “That dog bit him on me!” he said

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5 This is the brother talking, wondering when the other will come back.
6 jamo nganmarnebayeng, “The dingo bit him on me” expresses that the action of (the dingo) biting his brother has affected the speaker.
“I’ll go back,” he went back to his Mayali wife now.

“I’ll go back. The widow and I will live together,” he supposedly said.

He went back and got her.

“(They) bit him,” he cried to them.

“The whole lot.”

“Really? “You and I will sleep now” (i.e. will be married), he supposedly said.

They camped.

They slept.

She had a child, that woman.

He kissed the child, they kissed the child.

He looked for fish, he bogeyed/dived for turtle too.

“He looked for fish, he bogeyed/dived for turtle too.

“Let’s you and I go and look at the river.”

“Come on!”

He got the turtle and everything.

That woman saw what’s it, crocodile’s tracks.

“Might be alligator (freshwater crocodile),” she said.

“He got the turtle and everything.

That woman saw what’s it, crocodile’s tracks.

“Might be alligator (freshwater crocodile),” she said.

“His tracks are here! Get it for me! Who will get it for me?”

“Where are its tracks?”
“Its tracks are there,” “that’s a no good one.”

“Let’s leave it!”[^M]

“Boney one,”[^M] he said.[^J]

But that woman wanted that crocodile, maybe.

But he wasn’t a crocodile.

He dived down.

He dived down, looked about to find, Oh! Big one.

Yes, he dived in, he swam under water and looked for him.

He examined it, “a big one,”

He said, and came up.

“Did you find it?”[^M]

“That's a bad one, no good.”[^M]

“Boney one, you should have killed it,”[^M] she supposedly said, “with kurrajong string. You should have killed it for me.”[^M]

"Really! It’s an old cheeky one,"[^M] (said the husband).

“I’ll try.”[^M]

He got kurrajong string.

And he made a rope for it.

“Hang on, I'll tie it up.”[^M] [^J]

It was all right (tame), supposedly.

[^7]: The man recognises the tracks as those of a salt water crocodile, and, hence, dangerous.

[^8]: Peter says the phrase “I’ll tie it up” first in Mayali, then perhaps in Jawoyn (unclear).
bumborrortmaywayn wakluk  
When they tied up (crocodiles) in the water,

warnangay gilkan warngekaburroy nabay wang ginga  
He kept on going under, and that animal was still snoozing.  
That crocodile.

gemo borrortji  
He tied its nose.

gemoborrortmay wakgonong  
He tied its nose under the water.

yi'meyn bonyi  
He came up now.

marneyilkkang barna yidukgang  
“Did you tie it up?”[M]

wo, warrkedo yembo juy  
“Yes, he’s cheeky”[M], he supposedly said.[J]

gek nagobeng bolki nganibalemgun  
“My husband and I will eat fat” (meat).[M]

yeko ngaworkjay gurnjin jungay ngalmuka ngalarbay  
“Hey! I’ve eaten fat today,” said the woman.

nabrerku namorekmorek yembo juy  
“Bad one, boney one,” she supposedly said.

naberndak nabay wang ginga nayukberndak  
It was big, that animal, that saltwater crocodile, big body.

gilkan darra ngapjuy  
He dived under again.

buyukwar’ mi  
They lifted it up.

waywayanay waykan lerryi’meyn  
It floated. It came to the surface.

nganbimangay nanongaku ngadakjeyn juy  
“My husband got it for me!” she said. “I really admire him.”

nabrerku mowe nay nabay wang gok darra  
The sun was bad (= fierce), and that animal too.

mowewayn nay  
When it saw the sun,

gunwurririj biyowmi wakluku gukwaklaying jop darra mi  
The crocodile threw him in the water and grabbed him, and churned up the water with his tail.

gawumbuyindin  
They fight.
They’re fighting, they’re hitting each other.

It bubbled, they hit each other.

He held the crocodile and just hung on to him.

Uh, that devil.

They’re fighting now, hey!

“Where (how) will I eat fat,” she said.

“I’ve risen up.”

“He’s killed my husband!”

“He tore his back,” that animal has big teeth!

The woman took the turtles back to camp herself.

She took it back crying, they took the game back. They were crying, and she came out.

“They saw a crocodile, yes!”

“Why did he rise?” she said.

He should have covered the crocodile’s eyes.

He would’ve gotten tame.

He opened his eyes and saw the sun.

He churned up the water with his tail, because he’s very cheeky!

Because that animal is dangerous,

And he grabbed him (i.e. the crocodile grabbed the man).

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9 The word *nga-balem-jar* is actually Jawoyn and Mayali within the same word, *-balem-* being Mayali for “fat”, and the rest *nga-* and *-jar* is Jawoyn for “I eat”.

Ginga (Crocodile) - Peter Jathura 65
walyukwongay He should’ve left him alone.
durl narngula wurrij warl'woyiynwayn When it turned its tail, it hit him hard, and
niyarnbay bumdorl'murrmi dronkmayn na he was drunk (=stunned) now.
... jop mi anarnbayan ...and that’s when he grabbed him,
anarnbayan bulkitj ngawelangbun jamba Like I really hit him hard, like that.
Black Cockatoo and Brolga Women- Peter Jatbula

This story amusingly features a tension between a Mayali Black Cockatoo male, and two female brolgas, who Peter suggests, were Jawoyn. (I had heard him tell this story before and so asked him about the cockatoo’s being Mayali.) Peter had lots of friends, relatives and campmates who were Mayali, originating from the large Aboriginal social field to the north of Jawoyn; but he also typically called them “Mayali bastards” – and some of the humour of this story pivots on that mixed relationship.

The Mayali black cockatoo wants to have sex with the Jawoyn women, but they say no. He flies away in a temper.

This story also features a common motif: birds who experiment and find out what their “right” call is. When they attempt the “right” one, they adopt it, as the brolga women do here.

Black cockatoo was fashioning a letter stick. Two brolga women up in a tree were pounding wild onion. Black cockatoo – naguynalabarrgitbarrgit as Peter calls him – was sleeping and those two women were eating onion. He almost got to them, but they refused him! He lifted up his leg (wanting to have sex with them), but they said, “No!”

“Hey! I thought those two were my wives!” he said. “I’m going for good!” He went down, threw the letter stick, and took off.

“Hey! Come back!”

No! I’m gone for good, east, he said.

He was probably Mayali.

The two women were eating the onion raw, and it stung their throats. So they poked the digging stick they’d been digging with down their gullets. They tried out different noises: “Garrak!” ‘Gurrwurlu!’ (noises of black cockatoo and curlew). “Gorlorrk!” they finally said. “Yes, that’s it!” They flew away too.

Black cockatoo, he didn’t come back. Those two Jawoyn women refused him, he got mad and flew away for good.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textit{nawun waykan bumburrong} & They were camping up there. \\
\textit{waykan guwarrk leda makwonay layn} & On top, but (they) made a letter stick. \\
\textit{buwol'mangay niyarnbay buynjay ngeya} & They climbed up and ate what’s it there. \\
\textit{may nabay yenang wurra ngeya may} & That food, what’s that tucker called? \\
\textit{Niyarnbay bumangay janak} & They got onion there.
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{10} naguynalabarrgitbarrgit is a Mayali word. Literally guyn means “kangaroo”; mala is used to refer to “language” or “dialect”; barrgit is a Mayali adjective meaning “other”. The sense here is to refer to the Black Cockatoo as someone who comes from the north of the Jawoyn area. More specifically, the term is used by Mayali people to refer to people of Alligator Rivers, language groups such as those traditionally spoken around Gunbalanya (Gagadju, Erre, Mengerr, Uningangk). Normally, the reduplication rule for barrgid would yield barrgi-barrgid (see Evans 2003:116). Peter seems to close the first segment with the consonant.
They climbed up there and pounded that tucker.

This ... that black cockatoo this one, *naguynmalabarrgitbarrgit*.

They ate, as for him, he slept.

Separate.

He almost got them, (but) they told him, “No.”

“Hey! I thought these ones were my wives!” he said.

He lifted up his leg (but) they refused him.

“Yes.”

“I’ll leave these two,” he said.

He went down, threw the stick whoosh, that what’s it... what’s it, the stick.

That letter stick.

He threw the stick.

“Come on, come on, come back to us.”

He took off.

He went all the way east.

“I’m not coming back.”

“I’ve made it, I’m going east for good.”

He went this black cockatoo.

Maybe he was Mayali.

These (two), they ate onion, ate it raw.

They ate that onion raw.

That cheeky part “bit/stung” them all over.
They poked their digging sticks down their mouths.

Digging sticks, that they’d been getting tucker (with).

They tried it out, “gorlorrk,” they said.

No (oops), they said “garrak,” no good.

They said, “gurrwurlu,” no good.

“Gorlorrk,” they said, that was it!

That’s it!

They flew away now.

As for him, he went for good, he disappeared.

He didn’t come back.

He left them, those two women, the two Jawoyn women.

He was Mayali, that one.

They refused him.

When those two women refused him.

He wanted to grab them, they refused him.

So that’s when he got angry.
Najik - How Women Used to Hunt - Peter Jatbula

This is a story Peter used to tell of the trickster Najik, Owlet Nightjar – also known as Najikwere. He made hunting what it is today.

Women used to hunt, not men.

Najik was going along and saw the two of them, they were roasting in a pit. One was lying belly-down. He reached them and said, “You and your wife, you’re by yourselves?”

“Yes,” one said, “she’s got a bellyache” (and that’s why she’s lying down).

Najik looked hard at her. “That’s a woman,” he thought.

He ate some of the innards from their kangaroo, and went back to his camp. “I’m going to roast them,” he thought. He went back. “Maybe you’re going to open the oven now?” he asked. “Yes.”

He got a big sheet of stringybark to cover them up with, along with the kangaroo meat.

“These two are lying,” he thought. “One says he’s a man, but these are two women.”

The two prepared the kangaroo, put cooking stones and laid out the kangaroo. He ran over and Wup! into the ground oven they went, and he covered them with paperbark. “That’s what I do to you two sisters, you two sluts always looking for trouble.”

He waited as they cooked, their eyes burst. He took them out and ate them with the kangaroo. “I should mess up (confuse) these kangaroo,” he thought.

Kangaroos were gathering. He went upwind of them. He farted. “Maybe I’ve opened their noses,” he said (meaning, now they’ll know to smell people, and dogs, and whitefellas).

Now, only men hunt. Those women should have made their vaginas available. “That’s what I do to them,” said Owlet Nightjar.

nabay ngalmukayek ley'leymay Just women looked for it.

bonyukley'leymay ngalmuka Women looked for them.

lay bonnanay Saw kangaroos.

lay Kangaroos.

bumbunay ngalmuka bonyi anbay Women killed them, women at that time.

mungguy gerrung walbunay wakay Men didn’t, no.

ngalmuka bumbunay Women killed (game).

bonlakwolakwonay He caught up to them.

bonwalakanay He peered at them.
ngalwula gaderk gabololo buyuknanay

- This one’s lying on her belly, they saw him.

gun

- There.

yo

- Yes.

ngalnongiyungu nurranigyina

- “You and your wife, you're by yourselves?”

yowoygn gagingbarang jungay ...
ngalarnbay ngaljajangayu

- “Yes, she’s got a belly ache,” her little sister here.

yo, gagingbarang ngarra jungay

- “Yes, maybe she’s got a belly ache,” he said.

yukyongnanay properly

- He looked hard at (her).

ngalmuka nabay jungay

- “That’s a woman,” he said.

gurni wurrnga ngangeywynay jungay

- “How could she refuse me” he said.

yowoygn

- Yes.

wangarrewunay ngukmangay
nganwojtalwojtal mangay byualwunay
buwonay bonyi

- She partly cooked it, gutted it, got out the lungs, they cooked it and they gave it.

yowoygn ngannmayang bonyi ngajarwu nen

- “Yes, maybe I’ll eat the liver now.”

ngannmayang jay uhuu
ja'ngajaaay ngagoyindin jungay

- He ate the liver.

- He ate it, “I'm going back,” he said.

gukal lakwolakwonay

- He reached his humpy.

ngawonngolunggu ngawonderrpmar

- “I’m going to cook ’em. I’ll roast ’em.

gen gurnjin ngagoyin

- “Ah, no, now I’ll go back.”

gaynwurrna nuwerr'mang nen bonyi
bungolu

- “Maybe you’re going to open it up soon, now cook it.”

yowoygn buynjungay

- “Yes, they said.”

goy'goyinay gukal gukmangay
nganberndak ye

- So he went back, and he got a big sheet of stringybark.

Nuf for twofella na bla coverim up laymuyuk

- To cover the two of them up, along with the kangaroo.
nawula lubra loafer I killim that twofella bonlakwolakwonay

“These meddling women, I’m gonna kill these two,” he caught up to them.

navula gawarrpmar yemboyi munggay ngeya ngalmukayarrk ngalbay jungay

“This one’s lying, it’s supposedly a man, but it’s what’s it, those two are two women,” he said.

more better ngawonderrpmanggu jungay

“Better if I roast the two of them,” he said.

goy’goyinay gukmangay bonmorkyongnananay

He went back and got the stringybark, and he watched the two of them secretly.

gawuynjapma’japmar gwumbuyayay layluk

They are poking them in, filling the kangaroo up with stones.

bonmorkyongnananay mot dunngapngapmay

He watched those two secretly, lifted the paperbark, slipped quietly into a hole.

Bepa

Wait.

gaya ganay

He went close up.

buynjuthererkoyinay gen darra

They were sharpening (a blade) maybe.

gukalmuyuk narnbay

And with the stringybark.

narngula najamorrwu ganamjiyi niyarngula

He’s standing here watching.

buynjuthererekoyinay yo

They were sharpening (the blade).

bumarr’mangay

They lifted it up.

marr’ bumangay got buynjungay wurrluk

They lifted it up, and put it on the hearth.

gun’ba gun’ba

From one side and the other.

bumbuy weynja'weynjangay na

They put it on top now.

bumbuyweynjyangay layluk niyarnbay

They put the stones on top of the meat.

niyarnbay wurra warnlakminay wup

He ran over there and wup!

yakay yakay yakay jamuyn buynjungay finish

“Ow! Ow! Ow! Grandfather,” they said, finish.

wanyuynjunggu nabay ngalgorrang

“That’s how I do to you sisters.”

nabokyurr’yurryarrk jungay

“You two sluts,” he said.
“Those two sluts those two,” he said

He was a cheeky bugger.

They did like that, he had them, they struggled, nothing, finished.

They what’s it, they went quiet, I took it from those two

And he cooked them.

He tended them, he heard them, their eyes burst.

“That’s what I do to the two of you sisters.”

“Those two sluts.”

The owlet nightjar.

He waited for the two of them, and he took them out now.

He ate them with that (kangaroo), maybe.

He kept on guzzling it with the kangaroo, he kept on eating them, all right.

“Aah, those women shouldn’t kill kangaroo,” he said.

It’s good, he ate full up, it filled him up now.

“Ooh, what’ll I do?”

“I should mess up the kangaroo.”

He saw a big mob of kangaroos gathered.

That Owlet Nightjar went and stationed himself.

In the middle.

He kept on watching the wind, “which way will I run? That way!”
There upwind he sat down. He farted.

They smelled him now.

Those kangaroos.

“Ooh, they’ve smelt me, maybe that’s good.”

They took it. “Maybe they smell people,” he said.

“They smell women’s sweat.”

He farted and that was it, he broke open the nose of the kangaroo.

And they smell us now.

It smells maybe dogs, it smells people, maybe it smells whitefellas, and cars, these kangaroos.

Owlet Nightjar messed them up.

Only men hunted after that.

He finished them off, women used to hunt.

Girls too, they say they were always after sex.

Kangaroos smell us now.

Only men.

Long ago only women hunted.

“Those women should have given us their vaginas,” he said.

“That’s how I knock them off, those sex-hungry buggers.”
Old “Blind-Eye” was to be ritual sponsor to two young boys, his grandsons, and take them to ceremony in the north. “They’re going to make them young men, take them, Blind-Eye”, people said to him.

Along the road, he told the boys to go into a cave to get a rock wallaby. They went inside and he kept urging them further and further. The young boys heard a whisging sound, *Widjidiwidjidi!* “What’s that whistling, grandpa?” they asked. “It’s the little wallaby,” he said. But really, he was twirling a firedrill. “Grandpa might kill us!” the boys said. But Blind-Eye made them go in, “You two are shit-scared,” he said. He piled up some spinifex and lit a fire, Poof! in the cave. The eyes of the two young boys popped, Pow! Pow! in the heat. Old Blind-Eye collected their bones in a basket and kept going north.

As he got towards the ceremony ground he raised large whorls of dust. He let it be known that he was bringing lots of participants to the ceremony, people of all sorts of different languages. He asked people at the ceremony for honey for all these participants. But really it was just himself who whooshed in and out and raised big willy-willies of dust. They brought him honey and he ate it all himself.

Lots of people were dancing on the ceremony ground. Blind-Eye looked for a little mouse-hole on the ceremony ground to go into. “Make the dance-ground really big,” he said, as if he had lots of people with him. From there, the trickster whooshed and swirled and blew up clouds of dust. He jumped up from the mouse-hole and poked the dancers in the arse, even the women!

“That’s it, they’re going to kill me,” he thought to himself. And yes, they did! The sun had gone down. He was making lots of dust willy-willies. His forehead poked out through the dust. He whooshed up in front of the mothers and fathers of the boys, and the basket of bones spilled out. He whirled and jumped up and poked them in the arse. People tried to spear him but he kept on going, whooshing and poking.

Finally, a “clever” put a stone under him. He slid on it and they speared him. He ran and slipped, Woops! into a hole in an ironwood tree. He jumped out and went back and poked them some more and then slipped back into the tree. Then they lit the ironwood tree on fire, and they watched as his innards ran out as it burned.

**naway darra mululuk buyukwo**

Another one, “You lot give him young boys (to initiate).”

**Gurni wurra nabay ngeniyay**

“What was that one’s name?”

**yowoyn**

“Yes.”

**dummuya ngiynbonyukwukan merre nawula nagomdujyarrk**

“Blind-Eye (old man), you take them north - these two young boys.”

**Gawumbeyin.gu buynjuy**

“They are going to make them young men,” they said.
Tricksters and Traditions

yo gandiynngerrwuy ngawonwukan juy

“Yes, I’ll take the two (I’ll take my two grandsons.”) – the old man calls the boy grandsons.

bonwukangay niwula wurra merre nen

He took them, maybe it was here to the north.

gurniwu nen

To where was it?

bonyukwukanay warnyukbengowanay

He took them, and he recognised a rock wallaby there

nibay dorriya

Where that rock wallaby had gone in.

dorriwayn ngeme’ngemenay

“You frighten it! you two brothers!”

bulakbulakbu nagorrang

“You shoo it into the cave! We want to kill it!”

bulakbu dunluk nyambun.gu

yo gandiynngerrwuy bonjungay

“Yes grandsons!” he told them.

yowoyn jamuyn

“Yes, grandpa.”

Bonbulakbunay nabay najuwaywoyarrk

He frightened them, those two kids, and he hit them.

bonbunay diit

“Grandpa, you might hit us, you might hit us, the wrong ones” (the boys think).

jamuyn wanyanbun wanyanwayirrbun

numolyerrmar buyukjarr’ma nabay

“You shit run down! You poke it,” he said.

jungay

yo bonngeya. gilkanmarrk. navula

He what’s it to them, right inside, “You get its tail! its rear end is sticking out here”.

gabokjarrayi wurritjma

(The boys say to him).

wakay nabay buyukjarr’ma gilkanmarrk

“No, poke it right inside, then we’ll kill it in the cave,” he said.

gerru nyambun dunluk jungay

yo gilkanmarrk bungemeng jungay

“Go right inside,” he said.

nawula gawitjwitjmar

“What’s that whistling?”

lay nabay nawalkwalk

“It’s a little kangaroo (wallaby).”

Narnbay garwarwungay

But it was him (Blind-Eye) working a firestick.
narnbay jalkwarak war'mi bur'mi jamuyn
too dark inside

He’d gotten a lot of spinifex, he blew on it. “Grandpa!” Too dark inside.

gilkanmarrk darra bolkmorokjiyay

Inside it was very dark.

gilkanmarrk bungemeng
numolyerrmar

“You go right inside! You shit run down!”

(You are scared).

marrk jalkwarak warngotmay uhuh
bambal'mayn

Grass, spinifex, he kept on putting it, he filled it up (the cave).

Witjitwitjitwitjit witjitwitjitwitjit

Witjitwitjitwitjit witjitwitjitwitjit

(sound of firestick being twirled).

nabay yenang gawitjidimamang jamuyn

“What’s that going whish whish grandpa?”

nabay ngeya nawula nawalkwalk

“That’s what’s it, a little one (wallaby).”

walkjilkmay

“The little kangaroo (wallaby) has fallen over.”

yo

“Yes.”

garwarwu jurdu ngum! dul' bonmuwum

He twirled the firestick, it sparked and caught! He lit the two of them.

jitjwarr oh goodness!
bunndul'muwukangay

Poor things! Oh goodness! He lit them!

bongenduyaaay burndumdowkdorowkmay

He waited for them, and their eyes burst.

goy'goyiyen leerrluk

He went back to camp.

goy'goyiyen niyarnbay burroywayn

He went back there where he camped.

bumburroy

They were sleeping.

borong mi na  borong war'warmay ngeya
waywo butbut waywo

He got a rope now, he loaded up what’s it, kurrajong rope and everything.

boynja'boynjangay na

He twisted it now.

boynjangay darra ngeya lolbasket
narnbay

He wove it like a what’s it, like a basket.
murrka nganberndak gen nganmo lang jungay
He loaded the bones, it was a big basket.
burrongiyn burrongiyn burrongiyn
He camped, camped, camped, many
garlayak malnguyn'mayn
nights.
wart yembo layiyay narnbay murrka,
Then supposedly, chuck! He threw the
yarlarr'juy basket, and it spread out (the contents
scattered).
garlayak malnguyn'mayn
“|I get the bones of those two, those
ngawonmolakwon nagorrang brothers”.

Ngan.gunyoynugu ngalgarrangngayu
“Their mother should’ve given me her
nganwonaywa yembo jungay vagina!” he supposedly said.
burrongiyn burrongiyn burrongiyn
He loaded up, put their bones, he put in
burrongiyn burrongiyn burrongiyn
their leg bones and pelvis bones.
garlayak malnguyn'mayn
He didn’t wash them, he took it just like
ngawonmolakwon nagorrang that in the basket.

Ngan.gunyoynugu ngalgarrangngayu
He took them back.
nganwonaywa yembo jungay

bonlerrkoyiyn
He went back to camp.
goy'goyinay na lerrluk

niyarngula jamba ring place galalniyay
Like here, there was a ring place
ngangarraywarra
(ceremony ground).
gilkan narnbay
ngangarraywarra

niyarngula jamba ring place galalniyay
Inside that.
gilkan narnbay

niyarngula jamba ring place galalniyay
There he put the bones.
gilkan narnbay

ja bonyi jawurritjmayn ngayiwa
And now he appeared himself!
arrarr'! juy dirn'mi

arrarr'! juy dirn'mi
Wow! wow! he came out!

nawula jawurritjmay nabalukayin!
“The sponsor has come out!” they said.
buynjuy

nawula jawurritjmay nabalukayin!
He went and sat down.
buynjuy

warngangay lerrwot

gotim bim
With white paint on,
dil'miyinaywayn
Where he’d painted himself up,
yemboi mungguymuyuk
Supposedly accompanied by men.

bonmangay
He’d fetched them.

yeko nginyiwa
“Hey, are you alone?”

yembo gerrung wanyanganingan
bunganibarlarr nawula ngawonmangay
“I guess we can’t hear that language, they’re a different language, the one’s I’ve gotten.”(The sponsor lies to everyone, pretending to have collected people)

yo
“Yes.”

ngawonmangay namalnguyn
“I’ve gotten lots (of people).”

ja bumbolkbirr’ma
“So clear the ground.”

bunggalalmakwo
“Make a ring place (ceremony ground).”

bolknay gajalngbam nabay
He looked at the place and there was a log.

bop too yukley’may
He was looking for a mouse.

dunley’may bop gayn ngangemen jungay
He was looking for a mouse-hole, maybe I’ll go in there, he said.

yo nge’ngekuluk
Yes, in the afternoon.

gaynwurra bulorlkanay wurru
bulorlkang bumbolkhalpmiwo jungay
Maybe they were dancing. “You dance Wurru! (This is a Mayali ceremony or song/dance style). Make the place really big!” he said.

wam bonbubijarrku
“You send them (the imaginary guests) honey!”

mungguy nabulkan ngawonwukanay
nanganinganibarlarr
“I’ve brought strangers, people of different languages.”

bonmogotmay niyarnbay
He put the bones there.

nge’ngekuluk gula ngawonyukwukan
gaynwurra wurru wow
bumbolkbirr’ma nanumbuyn’gu
In the afternoon, “I’ll take them this way.” Maybe they were dancing. “Clear the place! Over yonder.”
He was looking for a mouse, where its hole is. “I’ll go in there,” he said.

“Yes, and what about honey?”

“You give honey there from all sides, there are a lot of them, send them a large amount,” he said.

He took it back and sucked it by himself. He sucked and sucked it. He slept full up, and then he sucked some more, oh Christ!

He sucked some more, that’s all!

“(This is) the last one, where they kill me,” he said.

True, they killed him.

Yes.

The sun had gone down.

He looked at the sun.

“Aaaah! Waaah!” he said, just himself.

They are ready (= they go), “Clear the area!”

Whirlwhirl, dust, they saw dust, like a willy-willy.

Oooh! A person’s forehead emerged! And another and another, supposedly from the dust.

He threw the dust around himself.

There’s a big mob!

He’d painted himself, so his forehead came out there from the dust.
merng dirn' gula darra merng dirn'mangay

His forehead appeared there, and appeared again.

yo namalnguyn buynjuy

“Yes, there are a lot of them!” they said.

got jungay niyarnbay ngeya nganmorlerrey

He put down that what’s it, that bone package.

bonbuwarnnay gayakaya o navula malnguyn mungguy

They saw them close up, o, this is a lot of blackfellas.

nivula gayarlok

Here close up.

ooo bbbbb merng dirn' yembo mangay merng dirn' bonyukwalakang walakang bonjungay

Oooo, bbbbb (sounds). “Forehead come out! Forehead out!” and he peered at them, he looked at them.

arrarr' narnbay naujkjirriyn yembo bonyi lerryi'meyn niyarnbay mirdiwakan

There that one person, supposedly came out, the messenger.

julwu ngani'nganiwonay darra gun'ba ngayiwa jawurritjmay

He was talking to the dust, and he came from there by himself.

ngurribepmen ngurribepmen wulp ngemeyn merngyi' merngyi'

“You come out! You come out!”[M], His forehead came out.

warnjungay gayakaya niyarnbay buwarbudiaywayn ngalgarranggayuyarrk

He kept on doing it, close to where they were sitting, the mother of the two.

najartngayu

And father (of the boys).

gayakaya merng yi' bonwalakangay darra mongeyapu bonyi

Close up, His forehead came out and he peered at them, and then spilled the bones out.

yeko dorlmurr.. dakjarr' bonjuy yembo dorlmurr bonbum dakjarr' bonjuy

“Hey!” bash ... and he poked them in the arse, hit them and poked them in the arse.

gilkanba yoynba yoynngemeyn na

From inside the ground. He went into the ground now.

yembo bonbunay nawula dakjarr' bonjungaywayn

He hit them as he poked their arses.

gukway' bumeyn

They jumped.
Ngalmukaluku bonjarr'may

And he poked the women too!

dakjarr' dakjarr' bonbunay darra yoynyek buyoynbunay darra dakjarr' jungay

Poked their arses! Poked their arses! Those just hit the ground, and he poked their arses.

ngalmuka darra bonbum.. lol! buyoyngamjongay dakjarr'juy

He hit the women too ... they stabbed the ground and he poked arse.

buwarnjuy yembo diril bumbum

They kept on, at sunrise they killed him.

bat navungurang nawula bat bibatgotmay na underneath

The “clever” put a stone underneath for him.

jurlurlumiyn na lolgiyowk

He slid like a fish.

den.gop buyamayn

They speared him properly.

layn worrombokangay ngeya marukal

He ran and hid in a what’s it, tree, ironwood.

dunwulpngemeyn

He went into the hole, slip!

bulukuyn buwarnbunay yembo darra lurra goyinay darra dakjarr' bonjungay

They nearly- they kept on hitting him, and he went back and poked them in the arse again.

bonjungaywayn laynngemeyn marukal

As he did it to them, he went inside that ironwood tree.

niyarnbay burndul'muwum

They burned him there.

dul' bumuwum

They lit it on fire.

buyongnanaaaay ngujjorr' borpporr ngujjorr' gepya yembo juy bornayingwayn

They watched, his innards ran down, and his innards spilled and spread as it burned. Splat!

mungguy niyay yembo

He was supposed to be a person/blackfella.

narnbay nabalukayin ngangebengmupmayn

I’ve forgotten the name of that sponsor.
This is a story about not sharing what you have, and how things can get out of place. It revolves around a fight between two protagonists who become Left-Hand Kangaroo and Pheasant.

Pheasant put some bamboo spear shafts in the landscape a long way off (at Bamboo Creek). Said Pheasant to Left-Hand Kangaroo: “What about giving me some yellow ochre?” Replied Left-Hand: “I’ve got nothing good, only rubbish.” He’d hidden the ochre.

But Pheasant saw him and said, “You’ve painted up!” (So he really did have good ochre).”Well, give me spears,” said Left-Hand to Pheasant.”I haven’t got any, I’ve come empty-handed,” said Pheasant.

So Left-Hand and Pheasant fought. Each had put the things he had a long way off, the ochre in one place and the spears way to the east. And (that’s when) one turned into Left-Hand Kangaroo who says “mmmhh”, and the other turned into Pheasant and goes “bubububuk.”

Peter told me this story in Gimbat Station, using it to make sense of a landscape in which bamboo spears were in one place and ochre way down the Katherine River at Ngartluk to the south of us. I presume the story had been told to him this way, relating to the distribution of bamboo and ochre, and very likely to this landscape where he was a boy. The framework of this story is widely found in southern Arnhemland, though the characters and the objects vary.
“What about you?”

“No, you give me a bundle of spears!”

“No, no spears, I’ve come empty-handed,” he said, he’s hidden it over there far away. Yes.

So he got mad.

Over there in the yellow clay, they fought there.

“Yes, this spear bundle, you shouldn’t have hidden it,” and he took his woomera, and he gave him a hiding, and he ran away that way with a spear bundle and stood it up.

Yes, they should have gone a long way over there.

On the Katherine River at Ngartluk, there he should have beaten him up and stood it up.

They’d already gone there a long way.

This way they stood it up, lowdown way.

“Yes, why did I beat him up there and stand the bundle up over to the east?” he said.

So he got cross and left the ochre there.

And there ochre is deposited.

He left a deposit there, and it’s there.
ngayumarden darra Jodet burayi' juy  
ngayumarden bukbuk bukbuk bukbuk juy  
He turned into Left-Hand Kangaroo, and as 
for him (Pheasant), he said “bukbuk”.

ngayumarden mmh juy  
As for him (Left-Hand Kangaroo), “mmh”, 
he went.

yo ngaJodetburayin ngarrkmarden juy  
“Yes, I’ve turned into Left-Hand 
Kangaroo, as for me,” he said.

niyarnbay gabudiyi gotmiyiyn  
He sits there, he put himself there.

waykanba bumbuyiyn close up langa 
Jowokba  
There on top they fought, close up to 
Jowokba.

niyarnbay gila Ngarratjiluk  
There at Ngarratjiluk.

Ngarratj niwalkgor'wor  
Ngarratj niwalkgor'wor (place near 
Ngarratjiluk).

niyarnbay bumbuyiyn gilirriwu  
There they fought over yellow ochre.

ngayewun buynjapjapgarlam  
He stood up a (spear) bundle over this way.
The Birds’ Revolt - Peter Jatbula

Peter tells a version of a story well-known and loved all over southern Arnhemland.

Stingy old woman Emu (Durrk) hoarded food and didn’t share it with her campmates. She had lots of young people around her but whenever anything good was hunted, or even any good yams were collected, she would tell them they could eat later, send them far away to collect grasses to suck honey with and preside over the food herself.

Peter’s version here features two sub-plots: Crow (Wakwak) got white in his eye (iris) when his sore foot was squeezed and pus spurted out; and Cuckoo Shrike (Wirriwirriyak), a really crack hunter, was called in instead to kill a kangaroo for everyone.

Once the kangaroo was killed, the young people were happy and started collecting firewood to cook it. The old woman, up to her usual tricks, told them they could eat later. But this time she is the loser. She starts out to get honey sop: “Go to Mun.gurulwam”, the birds supposedly said (here Peter names a distant Arnhem rockpool). They keep telling her to go further. Meantime the others staged a kind of revolt, with Quail (Jirrirti) concealing himself in the grass and taking pieces of meat. They hid these pieces; and lo and behold, as she comes back they turn into birds and fly off with the meat! Old woman tried to lure them back: “I think you’re great, come back.” “No”, they said, “you always keep food from us.” And they took off with the meat.

Old woman’s belly was singed from the fire. She experimented with her sound. “Maybe I’ll say “ber”!” No. “Maybe I’ll say “wawk!” No. As she kept forcing tucker down her throat: “Maybe I’ll say “murrk! gulp!” Yes! That’s it. And she turned into Emu, making the deep thumping noise that emus make.

Some of the art of this story lies in the exchanges between Emu and the others; in the details of the killing and cooking of the parts of the kangaroo, and the revolt of the soon-to-be-birds as they make off with the meat.

bonlakwolakwo bunbura Get that tucker!

that Durrk That Emu.

gapgampay ngayiwa niyarnbay may bonlakwo She was guzzling it herself, you get tucker!

gaywu’ bonjungay yawurriy whole lot She didn’t let them have any, she told them, all those young boys, Kangaroo, Wirriwirriyak, Jirrirti, nawarnbaywu Crow, and Cuckoo, Quail, she was bongenduyayn that old woman ngalDurrk looking after them, old woman Emu.
They did (like that), they were starving, she didn’t give them food, she ate the tucker herself.

That one that has what’s it, hair like barlingayn (a hairy root vegetable).

I can’t see him here, up there.

Up in spring country.

She ate, oh, this Cuckoo he had a bad foot, he had a sore.

A stick had poked his foot, and he had a splinter.

They went to the river, and ate sugarcane grass.

Grass, they called it, they sucked sugarcane grass.

Crack! A kangaroo got up, went and sat down.

“Let’s go get him, let’s go get Cuckoo!”

They fetched him.

Got him.

Over there we saw a kangaroo!

Yes!

“But I’ve got a sore foot.”

---

11 An interjection which is a feature of the southern Mayali dialect Kun-dedjnenghmi (and from which the name of the dialect derives). Sometimes used by Jawoyn speakers (who were all fluent in dialects of Mayali), they variably pronounced this detjneng, detjnyeng, and (with final glottal) detjnyeng’. It marks the regional lect but has no propositional meaning.
Tricksters and Traditions

bonyi nganbidummuwu nyanumbibrikyuma

“Now make a hole for me, and squeeze the splinter for me!”

Brikjuy o ngarrk way Wakwak narnbay

Squeezed it! and me! that Crow now.

dunjuy norrwartbum dumjirr’ juy narnbay
gadumdar’mar

Squeezed it and the pus sprayed, squirted his eye and so he’s got a white eye.

ngandumjirr’mayn juy

“You squirted my eye,” he said.

gadumdar’mar na altogether

He’s got a white eye now.

ga’ngangay buyukbenggo’ benggowanay nawula

He went, they recognised him.

o niwula bumbuding gerrung wanyulowan juy

“You all sit here! Don’t move!” he said.

nawarnbay nalayimak number one killer
Wirriwirriyak

That Cuckoo is a number one hunter!

warn gunilakwonay buyukyongnay

He snuck up, they watched.

gayakaya

Really close.

wurrripitj juy gukgot

Whiz! he threw it, and laid him out (the kangaroo).

yamayn lay

He’d speared the kangaroo.

nababa ngadakjeyn naburwor
buynjungay gun’ba gun’ba

“My brother! My little brother! I admire you!” they said all around.

bulerrkoyinay burramarden darra

And they took it back home.

bunggangay bungolkgolrerri

They went and collected firewood.

lay bonyi lakwo

Get the kangaroo now!

laynyarrang laynyarrang yeko gerru gurnjin
bunggarn’mar

“Our meat! Our meat! Hey hey!”

“Later today you’ll nosh it.”
They doubled it up.

They cooked it.

They gutted it, they got the kidney one side and the other, the liver.

They threw the lungs in the fire.

They ate it, finished it.

“We’ve finished it,” they put the cooking stones.

“You get grass!” she said, that way.

(At) Mun.gurulwam, they supposedly said.

She went off to fetch it, “yes, here?”

“No, further on,” they supposedly said.

They kept on making it (the oven).

Quail hid the tail part and rib-cage.

The leg part, the leg.

The arms on either side, the head, the backbone.

They hid it, they sang out, and turned into birds.

Crow, Cuckoo shrike, that killer.

“Hey! Come back!” they said.

Quail had hidden the tail in some paperbark.
Hid himself, she came back, “hey!”

“You bring it back to me!” she said.

“No, you refused us yam all the time,” they said.

“No, you bring it back for me, you’re my children, I admired you,” she said.

“No, we’re not coming back, now we’re birds,” they said.

With the kangaroo meat.

“Jirrirti!” he said, in the paperbark.

What’s this talking, that seems to’ve hidden in the paperbark?

“Jirrirti!” it said, she tore it, he lifted it up and then took off, dodged, she tore off the kangaroo backbone.

That’s all! They took off! “Bye-bye!” they said.

“We’ve gone, we’ve become birds.”

They’d lit the fire already.

As for her, she’d become an emu.

Her belly was burned, “what’ll I say?, maybe “ber’.”

“Maybe I’ll say “wawk!”

She supposedly said.
gurni nen ngajung jungay yembo

“What’ll I say?” she supposedly said.

narnbay warnjay bidort gen ngeya bura

That one kept on eating bidort (water tucker), oops, what's it, bura (grass yam).

jarr'jarrmiyiyn gotim that may murrk ngajung yowoyn murrk dum’ juy

She poked herself with that tucker, “I’ll say “murrk”, yes! “murrk”, and she thumped.

bare nawarnbay lerr na gamjarr'miyiyn Durrk burayiyn na dumdum dumdum

She poked her throat with her yamstick and turned into Emu now, dumdum dumdum.

finish early fella he been look back balganay

Finished, she looked back and went on.

ngar ngaryi'meyn nganmarnak marnakyi'meyn

Her hair (feathers) came out, her arms came out.

gulp gulp juy boyn

“Thump! thump!” she said. That’s all.
This was one of many times that Phyllis talked of how things went after the war. During most of it, she and her family were at the Army camp at Wurlaba on the Waterhouse River, to the south of Barunga (formerly Bamyili) where Phyllis lived from its founding in the 1950s onwards. After the War, she and her family were transported to Joe’s Garden to the north – Phyllis called the (white) man Joe who had started the garden “grandfather.” She again mentions Ted Egan, the welfare officer who shifted them to the King River, Durrkgamernnggarlan, where Phyllis’ daughter Lynnette made her appearance (see story Worre). “We were minding that whitefella, what’s his name? Frazer Allen,” says Phyllis, referring to the camp superintendent, “he was working for us.”

Shortly they had to shift to Dangdangjal (Tandangle in English), near Beswick Station; they went on foot. As she walked, her baby Lynnette fell out of her coolamon, and this was noticed by a man Phyllis called brother (he was *gamarrang* skin, and Phyllis *wamutjan*). “She fell in the sand,” says Phyllis – not on the hard ground -- “I was so tired.” They walked overnight and came out at Tandangle in the morning. The water gave out there too, after a while, and they had to shift again.

She mentions that her mob rejected the idea of living at Beswick, which had been established as a pastoral training station in 1946. “It’s people of different languages who lived there,” she says, reflecting the fact that many others from central and northern Arnhemland, people who were not Jawoyn, came in to Beswick. “Only old Maudie and Magnolia” were familiar – they were Jawoyn, and were Peter Jatbula’s mother and mother’s sister. “All the rest were different,” she says, but still, “the place was ours.”

---

**niyarnbay nyirrimbudiyay bonyi kamben**  
We camped there now, we shifted to the compound at Mataranka, we camped down at Wurlaba there.

**niyarnbay nyirrinyjirrkangay bonyi nawun**  
Mataranka

**niyarnbay Wurlaba niyarnbay**  
nyirrimbudiyangiyn

**war narnbay welangwatiyiyn mam**  
The war was ending, the enemy was going.

**nabaywu nabaranggu watjiyiyn**  
The soldiers took us from there.

**nyanbuwelanggorrkangay nawula naJoe**  
They carried us here to Joe’s camp.

**lernggayuluk**

**niyarnbay yukwonga nyanbuynjuy**  
They left us there.

**naJoe he been nger'manggu bepa fitjwarr najamuynngaku**  
Joe, he wanted to have a spell, poor thing, my grandfather.

**jamuyn ngajungay narnbay mam**  
I called him grandfather, that whitefella.
After the War - Phyllis Winyjorrotj

Him, he lived there.
As for there, melons, pumpkins, all kinds, he put (there).
A lot of people were camping there.
But after, the water gave out and we carried our swags further, that Ted Egan.
That welfare bloke.
Teddy Egan.
We went to King River.
What (at) King River.
Durrgamernnggarlan, yes, we went there.
We made camp there.
Her, she was born there.
That’s Lynette’s place.
King Valley this way, no, Barnatjal low down.
Only higher up there is her place, her, Lynette.
There where she was born.
Good compound too.
Aborigines were working there.
What whitefella were we keeping?
I’ve forgotten that whitefella now.
His name.
No, Frazer Allen.

We camped there, poor things.

He worked for us there, they looked after us.

But after, when the war died down, we split up.

We went this way, we carried our swags.

On foot, he carried only the swags ahead to Tandangle.

Us, we went on foot this way.

We kept on going, it was supposedly close, I thought when we went.

But after Lynnette fell on the ground, I was tired, I was carrying her on my hip with a coolamon.

With paperbark.

But she tipped out.

“Hey! she’s tipped out,” ngolojernnguyn he said.

Like “ngolojernnguyn,” my brother (said).

“ngolojernnguyn” there, “the poor child has fallen,” he said.

“Yes, I’ve left her behind in the sand,” I said, me.

Good job not on hard ground, she fell in the sand.

“ngolojernnguyn,” that gamarrang (skin).

Him, his own language.
After the War

Phyllis Winyjorrotj

yowoyn nganingayu
Yes, his language.

niyarngula warnbudiay naJawoyn nyirrangmakan nabay
Us, (we were) the Jawoyn camping here.

narnbay nganingayu “ngolojernnguyn”
(In) his language, “ngolojernnguyn” (he said), “she’s fallen.”

narnbay linay
“ngolojernnguyn,” “the child’s fallen down,” he said.

“ngolojernnguyn,” yembro walklinay juy

yowoyn narngula ngawokmangay ngangeyayn gen gundarl nganethunaywayn ngajuy
“Yes, I’ve dropped her, I’ve what’s it, because I was carrying her on my hip with a coolamon,” I said.

gongorlung nganethunay
I was carrying her on my chest.

gongorlung larrukmuyuk nganethunay
I was cradling her with paperbark.

arnbay gila welangyipmayn
And she fell.

ngajaweyiyn bulkitj nawula nawula Durrkgamerngarl gawak bolkgawak
I was so tired because Durrkgamerngarl was such a long way.

nyirringganay nangekaaan nidirlmiwu nawula Dangdangjal nyirriynjawurritjimayn
We went at night, at dawn we came out at Tandangle.

narnbay oldfella compound niyarbay gauwuynjuyung
That’s what they call the old compound.

niyarbay nyirrimbudiangiiyn wakay
We camped there, no.

welangwatjiyiyn wak darra niyarbaywa
The water ran out there too.

jwegmuyuk darra nyirriwarngoyiyn niyarngula girlirrkmuyuk
With our swags we came back here.

niyarngula jangarla na
Here, for good now.

niyrriwelangbudiay
We made camp.

nagar'gar buwatjiwatjiyiyn ngalgar'gar buwatjiwatjiyiyn
The old men and old women have gone.

niyarngula “Tandangle” narnbay gauwuynjuyungwayn Dangdangjal yembro nyirringgangay nyirrimbolkyongnanay
Tandangle, what they call Dangdangjal.

We went, we looked at the place.
nawula nyawonga Beswick nawula wurra wanyangenyorr'miwukan jarrang nyirriynjuy

“We don’t want this Beswick, floodwater might drown us,” we said.

nyirringgoyiyn giwula niyarngula jangarla na

We came back this way, for good here.

nabaywu burrangmakan nanganibarlarr niyarnbay gawumbudiyi

Them, the foreigners (“other language”) live there.

ngalMaudieyarrk ngalMagnolia boyn niyarnbay jatgorrang

Maudie and Magnolia, that’s all, two there.

ngalJawoynyarrk

The two Jawoyn.

nabaywu darra naginba

But the rest.

nawangbarlarrwaywo

Are all different (“meat”).

nanganibarlarrwaywo

All different language.

gulawu merrewa gulawa gonangba bungganay niyarnbay gawumerenden burrangmakan

They’ve come from the north and east and they congregate there, as for them.

but warnlerrngakuyek

But it’s still only my place.
Phyllis talks about what happened after the War. She and her relatives were at an Army camp, Wurlaba, on the Waterhouse River near Mataranka, for much of the Second World War. Four vehicles came and under the guidance of Ted Egan, then a patrol officer (later a nationally known and beloved musician and entertainer) they were taken to Joe’s Garden (near Maranboy). Later they were moved to Durrkgamerggarlan (on the King River), then they walked to Dangdangjal (Tandangle, near Beswick), where her mother and father worked baking and doing other jobs. Water was a problem on the King River, and also became scarce at Tandangle, so they came to Barunga (first called Bamyili).

Phyllis says that her mother and brother are buried at Barunga, where she lived during all the time I knew her, near a ceremony ground that is off-limits for that reason. People go there for ceremony and stay a long time. Once the policeman asked her if he should go and fetch somebody from there, but she said “No.” In saying this she asserts the importance of ceremony being carried out there, over the policeman’s performance of his duties involving people who are at ceremony.

The motorcar took us from there, the Army.
Poor thing! At Mataranka when they finished, that war.
They were fighting in the east, oops! west.
Four Army motorcars took us.
They took us here to Joe’s garden.
They put us there, poor things, at old Joe’s there who’s died.
We camped there.
Not Durrkgamernggarlan, this Joe’s garden, that police station here to the west.
This Maranboy police station.
There at Yowokluk.
There where Old Joe used to camp.
welangjoyiyn too that mam
He’s died too, that whitefella.
niyarnbay nyirrimburroy
We camped there.
niyarnbay nyirrimburrongiiyn ngalgarrang najart
We camped there (with) my mother and father.
from there narnbayan mam gawuynjuyungwayn might be joyinay yanganbo na
That man that they call him, might be he died long ago.

Ted Egan
Ted Egan.
yowoyn nayukberndak
Yes, a big man.
gawarnyuk niyarnbay gabudiyi Alice Springs
He’s still alive, he lives in Alice Springs. [said by FM]
nayukberndak but
A big man but.
jarrmunggin
Cousin.
might be welangbambutjimayn nen
Might be he’s already white-haired.
narnbay nyanwukanay
That’s the one who took us.
nyanwukangay nawun
He took us there.

Durrkgamernggarlan gawuynjuyungwayn
To where they call it Durrkgamernggarlan.
narnbay ngalLynnette lerrngayu ngayimakan
That’s Lynnette’s (birth) place.

walklinay niyarnbay
She was born there.
narnbay na nyirrimbudiyangiyn niyarnbaaaay
We camped there.

wakay
Nothing.
wakmiyn
No water.

nyirriwarngoyiyn nyirriwarngoyiyn niyarnbay
We went back, we went back there.

right past gula nyirriynjungay swag nyirringgorrkanaybay
We went right past this way, we carried our swags.
There wasn’t policeman yet, we went this way, we went, we followed the ridge with our swags.

No, this road didn’t exist yet.

We went this way, all followed there.

Here to - what’s this place.

(It was) the old compound before.

Tandangle
[said by FM]

Yes, Tandangle, that man took us there.

With swags, there the children went to school.

There my mother and father baked bread.

Some rounded up (looked for) cattle on horseback.

They bunched them up, brought them, shot them there.

We ate, we lived there.

Then the water ran out.

It ran out.

So we came back this way for good.

For good now.

My father is buried there, there on the other side.

Here, nothing, only my mother and brother (are buried).
Here.

They made it there (the grave).

My daughter (child) is there.

Me, my brother is that way.

There on the ceremony/sacred ground.

That is his burial place.

Because there, that’s where the old lady (ngal-Mamurna of Gunabibi ceremony) gets up.

Up there.

Nobody goes around there, neither whitefella nor “mining”, I’ve closed off that area to them.

They do (work) this way, they look for “gold mine”.

Yes, they don’t go.

They didn’t go, no, the policeman too almost went there.

He asked me.

This way, with Simon, “We’ll catch them up and we’ll get (arrest) them, up here”, they said.

“No, that (place), that’s (the place where) ngal-Mamurna (is), it’s ok.” (i.e. the old men are keeping the young men there).

“It holds them, it takes them”, I said. (i.e. the ceremony keeps them).

Four months or one year they stay.

Him finish that trouble bla all about. They been takeim that old woman they been wanta try go through there but I been say no, you not allowed to go there!
You may not go either.

“The “old woman” has eaten them”, I said.

“She took us long ago like this, for nights and nights and nights”, I said.

“Many nights”, I said, “you can’t catch them up or get them”, I said.

I told him to go back, he went back all right, that policeman

“The old lady has eaten him.”

He asked me, “I’ll go and get them?”

“No, you can’t go there”, I said.
Phyllis talks about her mother’s country, Jurlkbaarrumbumun. It is on the Chambers River east of Barunga. She mentions it as a place where Rembarrnga (and Jawoyn) would meet up.

Although she does not give all these details in this story, Phyllis’ mother, Galkjorrotj (Laurie), was Worawurri clan, and her dreaming was sugarbag, from the place Phyllis is talking about here. In the river at this place are submerged rocks which people used to clean of algae and weeds, but nobody has done that for a long time.

Phyllis then turns to talking about the old times, and very discreetly gives a version of Maranboy, the mining camp that was booming in the early twentieth century, that attracted many indigenous people from southern Arnhemland, as well as a large population of white miners. She talks about how miners would cajole Aboriginal men to lend them their wives for money, and how this resulted in spearing at Maranboy and elsewhere in the region. She tells how whites would ask for Aboriginal women and then the Jawoyn men would sneak up on them and spear them at night. She also mentions that Barlamumu, or Aborigines from Arnhemland, were “cheeky” too, probably thinking of a particular incident at Caledon Bay in which her father participated as a police tracker.

Jurlkbaarrumbumun yowoyn narnbay
Jurlkbaarrumbumun nabay
ngalgarrangngaku lerrngayu
naganyangaku lerrburrang arnbay

nibay ngaganay

I’ve gone there.

(FM: Whitefellas call it Chambers River)

Jurklbarrumbumun nabay nganiwa
Jawoyn

niyarnbay bungganay

They went there.

bungganay niwulawa bungganay

They went from here.

gun’ba buloyinay naRembarrnga gula
buloyinay naJawoyn

From there came the Rembarrnga, this way the Jawoyn.

gurni wurra darra bay naJawoyn yowoyn

Where is that, yes the Jawoyn.

naRembarrnga buloyinay yanganbo
nagar’gar buwatjiwatjiyiyn na

The Rembarrnga came before, the old people have gone now.

bulakwoyinay

They’d meet up.
FM: Did they camp there? Or here?

There at Jurlkbarrambumun, there’s the old station.

They minded the station there.

The old people would go there.

They sometimes speared whites.

Jawoyn (are) different, Letburrirt by themselves, they’d go.

They speared them, they (white men) stole their women, they speared them (white men) in the open.

That was when they didn’t speak English.

They only talked language, Jawoyn, they just talked the one.

What whites did they spear? [said by FM]

(They speared) all kinds of whitefellas, about women, when they’d go to whitefellas.

When they’d go “bludging”.

They used to go before.

“Take this money.”

“Go!”

Sometimes they asked them,

“Give me your wife,” they’d say.

They’d say to the old men.

Your uncles, you know, who’re gone now.

(When) they were young,
bungganay bonbujawanay
They’d go and ask them.

bonbuyukwonay
They’d give (the women) to them.

narngula niyarngula darra Maranboy
Here too at Maranboy they’d spear whitefellas in their sleep.
nabay bonbunggekayamangay mam
Here at Maranboy,

niyarngula Maranboy
They’d spear them.

bonbuyamangay
They’d bring their women to them.

narngula niyarngula darra Maranboy
Here too at Maranboy they’d spear whitefellas in their sleep.
nabay bonbujawanay
They’d go and ask them.

bonbuyukwonay
They’d give (the women) to them.

yo wiyn' bako ngiyunjuyung buynjungay
Yes, just like this, the whites would do, and those ones, the old people.
mam nabay bunnrangmakar nagar'gar
They had a lot of thoughts, the Jawoyn, Letburritt,
nawula naJawoyn naLetburritt

nabrerku
Bad (dangerous).

nabay bonbuwonay nabay nangekan
They gave them to them, at night they’d chase them, sneak up on them, spear (them).
bonbugalkkwanay yama'

waaw jungay narnbay mam
“Oww!” that white man would go.

mot ma buynjungay
They went silent.

narnbay mangal wire buynjungay
They’d do it with woomera, wire (spear).

ngalmuka darra wukuyern'milakminay
The women would just about run in fright.

boyn
Finished.

arnbay yama' buynjungay
They’d spear (them).

arnbay mam arnbay whitefella narnbay
The whitefellas, man and woman, would be lying there dead.
ngalgurukguruk buwelanggukburroy

buyn'milakminay nagar'gar nabay
The old men would run away.
najamorrwu too bonbuyamangay
They speared policemen too.
nabay burrangmakar gula gonang
As for them, this way to the east.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>barlamumu mungguy gawonbujuungwayn</td>
<td>What they call “barlamumu”(^\text{12})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aborigines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nabay nabarang‘barang</td>
<td>Cheeky ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nabay najamorrwu bonbuyamangay</td>
<td>They’d spear those policemen, poor fellows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jitjwarr</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>gula gonang bonbungeyay</td>
<td>This way to the east they what’s it,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whitefella nabay najamorrwu</td>
<td>They speared policemen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bonbuyamangay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{12}\) Barlamumu is the word southern Arnhemlanders use for eastern and northern Arnhemlanders.
Phyllis talks about watching her father cut the roots of ironwood to get the hard wood to make spearpoints. She says she remembers this happening at Maranboy, her bare “yamstick” (birthplace, for a woman, is called bare). This makes her think about her mother’s having had another child near or at Darwin. The authorities tried to get her to go to hospital, but she didn’t; and then she came back to her home country.

She talks here again about her mother’s and uncle’s (Willy Byers’) country, Jurlkbarrambumun, on the Chambers River. She talks in general about dreamings making country, and eventually identifies the dreaming at Jurlkbarrambumun as garderre “long-nosed sugarbag.”

**nabay najartngaku ngananay ngaganay** I used to see my father, I would go.

**ngalongolonay ngalgarrangngakumuyak ngabudiyay ngayongnanay narnbay gurritjmangay ngeya mulyurruyn ngandakjarr** I’d follow him with my mother, I sat and watched him, and he dug out the ironwood root.

**dokbunaay gurritjmangay dokbunay welangmangay** He cut it, dug it, cut it and took it out.

**narnbay nganbrikngayu makwonay mayarrwu ngangemirn makwonay** He made the hook of the light spear.

**ngangemirnngayu winjawun** The hooked part for the spear.

**makwonay** He made it,

**anbay gotmangay** And put it on.

**mayangay** He mounted it,

**gunngeya** With what’s it,

**butbut** Kurrajong.

**najartngiyngu Beswick budiaywayn** When your father was at Beswick? [said by FM]

**yowoyn** Yes.

**niyarngula bonyi niwula Maranboy nyirrimbudiay** Here now, we were living here at Maranboy.

**niyarngula Maranboy** Here at Maranboy.
Jurlkbarrambumun - Phyllis Wiynjorrotj 107

niyarnbay ngawelangwalkliyn
That’s where I was born.
narnbay lerrngaku Maranboy
That’s my place at Maranboy.
yowoyn barengaku
Yes, my birthplace (lit. yamstick).
niyarnbay ngawalklinay
That’s where I was born.
yoynluk
On the ground.
gerrung hospitalsuk
Not in the hospital.
nangeyangaku ngarrkmakan gula
My what’s it, as for me, (she) was born here at Mataranka.
wakay nabay ngawelangwarrpmamang
No, I’m wrong, cousin,
jarrmunggin
Darwin walkliyn
She was born at Darwin.
ngayimakan nabay Darwin saltwaterluk
As for her, that was at Darwin at the ocean.
niyarnbay wotjiyiyn ngalgarrangngaku
My mother hid herself there, and she was born, she didn’t go to hospital, no.
wakay
saltwaterluk nigelk niyarnbay walkliyn
On the ocean, at the beach, she was born.
ngalgarrangngiyngu
Your mother?
[said by FM]
yowoyn gun.gunniyaywayn
Yes, when she was pregnant.
gerrung buynjuy mamwaywo ngiyngangu
Didn’t -- all the whites said, “you should
hospitalluk buynjuy
go to hospital,” they said.
yanganbo this one gerrung waljitijinjay
Before, (when) there was no citizenship
wakay
nothing.
gurnjin welangiitijinjin
Today citizenship is on.

buynjawam narnbaywu doctor ngiyngan
They asked (her) to do that, “you go to
hospitalluk buynjuy
doctor in hospital,” they said.
wakay juy
“No,” she said.

ngabudiyi jamorlk gerru ngoyin gun
I am just sitting down, after I'll go back to
lerrngakuluk
my place.
walkngaku juy

ngarrkamakan gula lerrngakuluk juy
gonang juy

ngalgarrangngiyngu, lerrngayu

yeah bla Warawurri mob there now

Jurlkbarrambumun

that un now little bridge where him
siddown lerrburrang now
naganyangaku ngalgarrangngaku but
buwatjiwatjiyiyn na

yowoyn

narnbay naHarold naol Willie Byer
welangjiyiyn niyarnbaywu lerrburrang
burrangmakan ngalwon

nargula Jurlkbarrambumun

narnbay na lerrburrang burrangmakan

yenang nen nabay lerr bolkmakwonay

nabay ngayimakan lerr gotmayn
nayung’yunggi yanganbo

bolkngewum gangay

nawula lerr narngula lerr gawunggarriyi
wang ganaywayn

nyingawunbun yanganbowayn ganay
bolkngewunay nawula bolkngewunay
bolkngewunay bolkgotmangay
bolkgotmangay bolkgotmangay

burranggurlung yenang wang

ngeyawaywo jambalawaywo galwan
durrkwaywo ngeyawaywo marramwaywo
gotmiyinaywayn

My child, she said.

Me, to my place this way, to the east, she said.

Your mother, her place?
[said by FM]

Yes, Warawurri (clan) is there now.

Jurlkbarrambumun.

Where that little bridge is, their place (now), my uncle, my mother, but they're gone now.

Yes.

That Harold, old Willie Byer has died, there is their place, as for them, the female one (i.e. Phyllis' mother).

At this Jurlkbarrambumun.

That’s their place, them.

What made that place?
[said by FM]

That place, old people put it before (the ancestors).

(They) named the place and went.

This place, they have this place, where an animal went through.

We don’t know (because) it was long ago, it went and named the place, named it, put it, put the place, put the place.

What is their animal?
[said by FM]

What’s it, turtle and all, goanna and emu and all, what’s it all, hawk, where they put themselves (in the landscape).
nabay nangengayu ngayimakan
That’s the name, as for that,
narnbay bolkmakwonay yanganbo
Made the place, before the ancestors put
nayung’yunggi bolkgotmayn
the place,
narngula gula bolkgotmangay
Put the place here this way.
gerrung wakay narnbay nagarlarrberndak
It's not nothing, there’s a big river.
nawula
bolkgotmangay nayung’yunggi yanganbo
The ancestors put the place before.
gerrung wanyirrimbengijiyay wakay
We didn’t hear it (i.e. we don't know this,
nayung’yunggi
we weren't there).
Made the place, before the ancestors put
bolkgotmangay nayung’yunggi yanganbo
the place,
gerrung wanyirrimbengijiyay wakay
We didn’t hear it (i.e. we don't know this,
nayung’yunggi
we weren't there).
[nayung’yunggi
The old people?
said by FM]
yowoyn nayung’yunggi
Yes, the old people.
narnbay bolkgotmangay
They put the places.
bolkngewu' bolkngewu' bolkngewu
Named a place, named a place, named a
bolkngewu' jungay
did like that.
niyarnbay nen batji garderre
Maybe it’s ground sugarbag or long-nosed
sugarbag? [said by FM]
yowoyn niyarnbay garderre gilkan
Yes, it’s long-nosed sugarbag there
underneath,
wakluk
In the water.
yowoyn
Yes.
bat naguyangguyang gajapjiyi
A really long rock stands there.
but nurlk berndak giwum
But a lot of algae covered it up.
buji nagar'gar warrungngeyaynwayn
If the old people had what’s it, their
nabay junggayi burrang
junggayi (ritually responsible person).
najartngakuwa ngalgarrangngakuwa
My fathers and mothers.
gen naganyangakuwa
Oops! My uncles and mothers.
ngalgarrangngakuwa
buji nabay junggayi warrungeyayn
If the junggayi had what’s it, had cleaned
warrumbirr'mayn all right
it, ok.
nabay nawalkwalk gen nen nabay layn nen nabay nen goya nen nabay walbal'mayn Because it’s small, maybe the tree or antbed or- if they’d shut it up.

gerrung warruyirtnanan nabay They don’t know (about) that.

gurnjiwurnjin nabay buwaitpela'burayiyn Today they've made themselves into whitefellas.

gerrung warrunggan.gan gerrung They don’t go (look after places), they don’t know language, nothing.
warrumbengjiyi ngani wakay

ngarrgiwa ngangan.gar Me, I talk by myself.

gurni buynjungay nayung’yunggi? nabay bat bumbirr’may? What did the ancestors do? Did they clean the rock? [said by FM]

yowoyn yanganbo, burndipmangay thatun niyarnbay gen wakluk Yes, before, they used to dive in the water.

wakluk narnbay garderre That long-nosed sugarbag is in the water.

garderre nangalkngayu niyarnbay The sugarbag’s mouth is there.

burndipmangay yanganbo nagar'gar junggayiburrang ngalgarrangngaku najartngaku Before they’d dive in, the old people, the junggayi for mother and father.

gen naganyangakua narnbay Oops! My uncle.

gerrung guwarrk najarrmungginburrang bonbudipmangay niyarnbay na But their cousins didn’t dive in for them.

bumbirr'mangay narnbay nurlk boyn They cleaned off that algae, that’s all.
Phyllis talks about her father, focusing on him as a hunter, and his hunting, preparing and sharing meat.

He would spray the countryside with water, as men did then, to make game plentiful.

He’d go out very early, before dawn, and he’d hunt. He would take water into his mouth and *bolgikgikma-* spray the countryside, so game would come up close. When he got something, he’d half-cook it, as people did, and then he’d bring it back part-cooked. Then they would cook it fully, and her mother would help. We children, Phyllis says, sat *mirrk-burak* “dry-chest”, that is, patiently and stoically. We would not ask for anything, she says; we would not make any fuss. We would wait.

Sometimes he’d get flying fox, knocking them down from trees with the special throwing stick for the purpose, called *bambarlun* in Jawoyn. Then her mother would prepare a ground oven, lining it with grasses. They’d break the flying foxes’ wings and roast them.

Her father would always take meat from the oven and prepare it, cut it up properly, and distribute it, to old people and others in camp. He would prepare and cut the meat properly, Phyllis emphasizes, not like today, where anything goes and people eat meat any old way.

*wak buworlmangay*
*bumbolgikgikmangay*

*angulumarra bunggikgikmay gula*
*buynjungay welangganay durrkwaywo*
*nibarlatj bayangay laywaywo*

*nibarlatj galwan dirn'mangay*

*arnbaywu yanganbo buynjungay nagar'gar but this time wakay na*

*wakay*

*bengiamoyamorlk gawunggan.gan*
*gawuley'mamang*

*yanganbo no more anarnbay bunggarriyay*

*najartngaku nabay ngagan.gan ngajanggan.gan jungay marak narnbay bolgikmangaywayn*

*ganay durrk yama'*

They drank water and they sprayed the country.
They sprayed (in) the air like this, they did it, and the emus and all scuttled along the plain, kangaroos and all.
Goannas came out into open country.
Before they did this, the old people, but not now.
No.
They just go any old way and look around.
Before they had that.
My father used to say, “I’m going hunting,” all the time when he sprayed the country.
He went and speared emu.
ganay garndalpurru gupu yamangay He went and speared female and male plains kangaroo.

ngeya wangarrewunay nganwangarre gorrka’gorrkanay gayewula And what’s it, he half-cooked it and carried the half-cooked meat this way.

marak yanganbo niyarnbay Maranboy All the time before there at Maranboy.

lerrkoinyinay niyarnbay He brought it back there.

najanggay ... yowoyn najanggay He was a good hunter, yes.

ngangonngekarrawuuuul ganay In the morning, he went.

ngangonngekarrawul ganay yi’menay In the morning he went, he got up.

garlayakmupmangay yi’menay The night was still dark and he got up.

winjangayu ma Got his spear.

balkanay Kept on going.

jungay mowe barang ’barangjinay guklerrkoinyinay The sun was really fierce, he brought the game back.

gilkan nigarlarr jangbenay And roasted it by the river.

wonga’ Left it.

goy'goyinay Came back.

ngamalkjangay wang jungay ngalgarrangngakuluk nyigan I’ve speared game, he’d say to my mother, let’s go.

yorryorr nawalkwalkan nyirringganay We children would go as a group.

nyirrangmakan Us.

nyirriyorryorranganyi nyirrinanay gabulbang We’d go in a bunch, we’d see there’s a pit.

yo najartngaku wang malkjangay nyirriwelanggoywoy’mangay nyirrang nawalkwalkan Yes, my father has speared game, we would rejoice, we children.

nyirriwelanggoywoy’mangay nyirriyertjiyay na nyirrimbudiyay We would rejoice, we played and we ate.
namirrkburak gerrung gurniwa
nyirriynjungay gebeng nganwo gebeng
nganwo garrang jart gerrung
wanyirrimbonjungay wakay

Stoically, we didn’t say anything, “quick give me, quick give me, mum, dad,” we didn’t say (that) to them, no.

namirrkburak nyirrimbudiyay

We sat stoically.

makwonay najartngaku durrk nen nabay
nen garnaldpurru nen nabay gupu nen
makwomakwonay

My father worked and maybe that kangaroo, female or male, he’d prepare.

dokdokbunay gotmangay larrukluk

He’d cut it and put it on the paperbark.

nyangay’mangay nyirrilakwonay
nyirrimangay

He’d call to us, we’d go to him and get it.

gula nawarla’mi mungguy nabay
namalnguynjanggi nabay dokbunay
nanwalk nanwalk nanwalk nanwalk
bonwonay najartngaku yowoyn

Like this, a big mob of people, many, he'd cut and give a little bit, a little bit, to all of them, my father, yes.

najanggay ngayimakan nabay ganay
najartngaku

My father, him, he was a good hunter.

najanggay ngajuyung

A good hunter, I say.

gerrung jamorlk walbudiay wakay

He didn't just sit around (doing) nothing, no.

ganay no matter wurgi’mangay
ngangonngekuluk

He went no matter, he worked in the morning.

gula nen nabay burrirt bengjiyay
gageriynmang

Maybe this way he’d hear flying foxes screeching.

bonbunay bambarluuuuun borrhwr’

He’d hit them with a long stick, (they’d) fall down.

bambarlun ngajuyung nabay
nalaynguyangguuyang

I call bambarlun, a long stick

wol’mangay yanganbo najartngaku bunay

He’d climb up, my father, and kill them.

baratjbunay

He’d swipe them.

gerru guwarrk linay yoynluk

And they’d fall down after on the ground.

borrwor’milinay

They fell.

garlangjiyaywayn

Where the platform was (to catch them).
Charcoal there.

He heaped (them) up and took them back to my mother.

My mother prepared grass, a ground oven.

She put grass.

She put leaves.

He brought (them) back and cooked them.

They broke the wings (and roasted them).

Kangaroo, to one side.

Flying fox to another.

They would roast it before.

He’d put it, a ground oven.

Grass for it, like this grass

He’d cut it.

He’d put it and soak it in the water.

He took it out and put it in the ground oven.

And then would put the game.

Flying fox and cow (meat) and all.

He’d put it in and bury it.

We’d sit and the sun would set this way.

We’d take it out, it was cooked.

We’d cut it like this, and maybe people.

One bit, one, one, one he’d give to them, my father.
As for us, we sat stoically.

Because my father was cheeky.

We’d sit there, us, we'd play.

He’d cut it for us kids, that’s all.

He’d call to them, he’d say to his wife, he talked to her.

He’d call out to my mother.

He’d call to us now.

We’d come back.

We ate.

We sat.

In camp.

We sat and ate, maybe emu, the small children.

The meat, our father would cut it.

The fat in one pile, the meat in another.

He’d prepare it.

He didn’t tear it up, no.

My father would prepare that emu or kangaroo.

He’d prepare it, cut it, and give them a little bit, to the young fellas.

He’d give to the old women.

Today, what’s it.
They don’t cut it, they just eat it any old way.

By themselves.
Phyllis tells about her grandfather (father’s father), Bamjuga: he was *letjanggi* “same place”, or from this area near Barunga and initiated near here. But she had also mentioned that he came from the west – probably from somewhere in the vicinity of Pine Creek. (Phyllis was related on his father’s side to people in Pine Creek, the Hart family).

Bamjuga carried the mails, and that is probably how he originally came into the Barunga area. She says she saw him when she was a girl; he was short in stature. He also travelled to Mataranka, where Phyllis herself spent a great deal of time with her family while her father worked at the police station.

She also tells how they came away from Mataranka after the war, and were taken by Ted Egan (well known singer and personality after his patrol officer days) to Joe’s Garden, then to Durrkgamernggarlan on the King River, then to Dangdangjal (Tandangle near Beswick). When water gave out there, they came to the Bamyili (Barunga) area, where the water was more plentiful.

Phyllis also talks about Maranboy as her place. She was born there, and spent a lot of time there with Sarah Flora and others. There was a storeman at Maranboy named Dan Gillen, whom she called “father”. The minefield nearby was a busy place in the early part of the twentieth century. Aboriginal people helped Dan Gillen bake bread, using antbeds to stoke the oven, and brew beer which the miners on the Maranboy field would drink. As for Aborigines, she says, they only got metho – from the Chinese storemen near Katherine. Old people would go on foot, on the wagon road past Barnatjal (King River Station), and they’d come out at the Katherine peanut farms. She says that she and Sarah worked there, sewing together the peanut bags. There were lots of old people there, but they are gone now.

People were scared away from the Katherine River area near the farms during the war, when the Japanese bombed the place. There was an old man who was injured, called *na-marnak-bom* “Bomb-Arm” as a result, whom Phyllis called “uncle” and I would have called “father” (as this implies, we called each other *jarrmunggin*, cousin).

**Yeah, naBamjuga ngayimakan letjanggi** Yes, as for Bamjuga, he belonged to this place.

**gula bujluk bulakayen’wonay** This way in the bush they made him a young man.

**but him still** But he still,

**garriwa ganay** He came from the west.

**mail gorrka’gorrkanay** He carried the mail.

**from Gajarran wuka’wukanaywayn right up Mataranka** Where he carried it from Katherine right up to Mataranka.
He carried the mail.
The whites hadn’t put the highway.
Bush.
Bush road.
I saw Bamjuga.
He was short in stature.
He would go this way (where she saw him).
There he’d go to Mataranka.
We went there, we stayed at Mataranka.
They’re making themselves bosses of that Mulgarn.
That Mulgarn and Birinjiyn to the east, no west.
I worked there at the old station,
Before.
Old Ned West was there.
I worked there,
At the station,
I worked there.
I was a young girl, my father worked there at the police station.
Yes, Mataranka.
We shifted there, (then) we came this way.
When?
During the war.
We ran away in fright from the Mataranka homestead.

Yonder to the other side.

We ran away, the whites took us, the soldiers poor things in cars they took us.

They brought us here to Joe’s garden.

We camped there.

We camped there and then what’s it,

The water gave out.

We kept on going west to Durrkgamernggarlan.

And we camped there for good.

We shifted from there, Ted Egan took us, that white guy.

He might’ve gotten old, maybe gone blind.

The one they call Ted Egan, the welfare bloke.

Poor thing, an old man.

We came and camped here.

East, in my country.

We camped there, no.

We said, “no water here,” we went to Tandangle.

Yes, who’s the whitefella there?

There was a whitefella there.
niyarnbay nyirriwurgi'may darra
buwurgi'may ngalmuka

We worked there, and the women worked there.

buwelangwatjiwatjiyiyn na yembo
ngalmuka

They’ve all gone now it seems, those women.

naFrazer Allen narnbay nangengayu

Frazer Allen, was his name.

niyarnbay budiyay

He lived there.

nyirrimbudiyay niyarnbaay

We lived there.

buwelanggangay na mam

The whites went.

nyirriwelanggoyiyn giwula darra

And we came back this way too.

girlirrkmun

With our swags.

moticarmiyn girlirrk
nyirringgorrka gorrkanay jijwarr

No car, we carried our swags, poor things.

nyirringgorrka 'gorrkanay niwula

We carried (them) here.

niwam

On our heads.

nidin.gal nyirriynjungay
nyirrinetbunethbunay nawalkwankanluku
darlluk

We carried it on our hips, and we carried the kids too, cradled in coolamons,

niwam

On our heads.

niberemelk nyirringgorrkanay swag
nyirrinetbunay

We carried (things) on our shoulders and we carried our swags on our hips.

ginba nyirrinetbunay nawalkwankan
larrukmun

Some of us carried our children with paperbark.

arnbay yanganbo

That was long ago.

nyirriwarngangay niyarngula

We kept coming here.

nyirrimbolknay

We saw the place.

najartngaku ngalgarrangngaku
bumbolknay niyarngula

My father and mother saw the place here.

niwula nyiwelangbudi jangarla buynjuy

“We’ll stop here for good,” they said.

bungan.gay

They talked.
Grandpa Bamjuga
Phyllis Wiynjorrotj

nganbornaleku nawula wak
najirrgulngayu

“It’s good water here, the spring.”

niyarngula nyibudi

“Let’s camp here.”

buwelangbudiangiyin na

They stopped for good now.

namalnguynjanggi na buwelangdirn’mayn
langgingaku niyarngula

A lot of them came out here, (including)
my brother,

watjiyiynwayn

Who has died.

ngangawuyiynwayn

Whom I’ve lost.

niyarnbay darra Maranboy nabay
Maranboy yowoyn

There too at Maranboy, there at
Maranboy, yes,

nabay Maranboy niyarnbay ngawalklinay

There at Maranboy, I was born.

niyarnbay gelkun’bawan

On the other side there.

arnbay olpela jawmil

The old sawmill.

niyarnbay ngawalklinay

There I was born.

narnbay lerrngaku Maranboy

That’s my place at Maranboy.

narnbay lerrngaku

That’s my country.

ngawalkwalk ngabarranburroy niyarnbay

I was a child, a baby there.

ngalNyalukjarrk nyirrang

Nyaluk and I,

Maranboy niyarnbay

at Maranboy there.

niyarnbaywa watjiwatjiyiyn na naol Dan
Gillen narnbay boss jungay

From there has gone old Dan Gillen, he
was boss there.

naol Dan Gillen

Old Dan Gillen.

jart marak nyirriynjungay narnbay

We always called him 'father'.

arnbay whitefella jitjwarr

That whitefella, poor thing.

gotmangay stoa naleku morro makwoy

He put a store, he made a good one.

Nyiirrimangay girirrkwaywo
blankitwaywo maywaywo lawawaywo
nyiirrimangay sugarwaywo dilitwaywo
bega

We got swags and everything, blankets
and everything, food and flour and all,
sugar, tea leaf, tobacco.
nabaywu naguya’guyangguyang bega
That really, really long tobacco.

narnbaywu nyirriwar’mangay
buwar’mangay bala nagar’gar
We loaded up on that, the old people loaded up.

nyirrang gen nyirriwalkwalkniyay jtitjwarr
Us, we were children. Poor things.

gurnjin.gu gok nyirringgarayinay
Now we’ve gotten old.

narnbay Maranboy
That Maranboy.

narnbay nagar’gar niyarnbay
buwatjiwatjiyiyn
The old people have disappeared from there.

nayenang wurra darra naol waitpelabay
naol Dan Gillen
And who? That old whitefella Dan Gillen.

narnbay najartngaku marak ngaganay
ngalgar’garwayn buloyinay niyarnbay na
My father, I used to go, the old ladies used to go there together.

buyalwunay bridí
They cooked bread.

buynjangbenaywayn
When they put it in the oven.

goyaluk buynjangbenay
They put it in an antbed oven.

bumakwonay nganarnbay buyalwunay
They made that and cooked.

bumakwonay bridí
They made bread.

Welangbatj… jalim’mangay wukanay
(They’d make) bread…He’d sell it, bring it.

buwukanay bonbuwonay nagar’gar
They brought it and gave it to the old people.

nayawurrriyn nawalkwalkan
ngalgarrangburrangba najartburrangba
The young fellas, the children, their mothers and fathers.

bonbuwonay
They gave it to them.

arnbay may na nyirriynjay niyarnbay
We ate that bread there.

yanganbo
Before.

beer darra niyarnbay hop beer
bumboilim’may
Beer, too, there, they boiled hop beer.

hop beer nabaywu gok namarlaworr
yenang nen nabay bumangay
For that they got leaves and what was that?
Grandpa Bamjuga - Phyllis Wiynjorrotj  123

yeast

Yeast.

yowoyn yenang nen narnbay hop beer
bumboilim’mangay

Yes, what was it, they boiled hop beer.

gerru guwarrk bottleluk
buwelanggotmangay dolkdolk ngalgar’gar

After, they’d put it in a bottle and line it up, the old ladies.

ngalgarrangngakuwa na

My mothers.

bunggotmangay gerru guwarrk freezeluk
bunggotmangay

They’d put it and after, they put it in the freezer.

buwelangbayam’may na nagar’gar

And the old men would buy it,

ngalgar’gar

The old ladies.

nagurukguruk mamluku buynjungay

Black and white did.

niyarnbay bumbudiay yanganbo

They lived there before.

minerwaywo buwelangbayam’mangay
niyarnbay buworkmangay

All the miners would buy it and drink it there.

burndronkmay hop beer that’s all wheat

They were drunk (on) hop beer, wheat.

nabay gok yeast

That yeast.

anarnbaywu bumboilim’mangay

They’d boil it.

because he been gamogamo yanganbo

Because it was hard before.

gerrung beer warruynjalim’mangay

They didn’t sell beer.

only methoyek buworkmangay yanganbo

They only used to drink metho before.

Where did they get it?
[said by FM]

Chinamanluk

At the Chinese.

nanumbuyn’gu Gajarran
bumbudiaywayn Chinaman

Over yonder in Katherine where Chinese were living.

warnbaywu na bumbayam’may

And then they’d buy it.

Did they go on foot?
[said by FM]

najorr bungsanay gerrung warrungeyay

They’d go on foot! They didn’t what’s it.
nagar'gar nabay nabarlokbarlok

Old people were quick.

wagon road bungganay

They went on the wagon road.

narnbay King River gwyuunjuyungwayn
nawula Barnatjal

What they call King River, that Barnatjal.

narnbay paddockwayn gajurr'menmen
nabay olpela wagon road ngaganay gadin
jadun

Where the paddock goes down, the old road, I used to go on that.

wagon road ngawarngangay waykan
nawun

I used to go the wagon road on top.

Gajarran

Katherine.

narnbay olpela fam

The old farm.

gulawan ganamjiyiwayn closeup la that
bat, close up la hospital but gulawan

Which is this side, close to that rock, close to the hospital, but this side.

niyarnbay big camp too they been haveim
nagar'gar

The old people had a big camp there.

but only for mam there na bal'mayn

But it’s been shut off by the whites.

niyarnbay nigelk narnbay nagarlarr

There on the bank, there (at) the river.

thatun only for nagar'gar bumbudiay
nabay

Only old (aboriginal) people used to be there.

gurnjin whitefella murndi'miyiyn nabay
 gabal'mamang

Now whitefellas have heaped up and it’s shut off.

gelkgun'bawan gulawan

That side and this side.

nabay nagar'gar yanganbo
nyinbuwalkwukanay nyinbuwukanay
yanganbo nyanbuwukanay gok
jarrmunggin

The old people used to take us as kids, they’d take us, cousin.

narnbay ngangarlarr nyirrilongolonay

We’d follow the river.

niyriiryjabakmangay

We’d fish.

niyarnbay binatpam buwurgi'mangay
niyarnbay nyirriirdin'may
ngalmari'marriyn nyirriwurgi'mangay
peanut

They worked (at) the peanut farm, we’d come out there, us girls would do the peanut work.
Grandpa Bamjuga - Phyllis Wiynjorrotj

ngalgar'gar nyirrimbonngay
And we’d what’s it, the old ladies,

nyirrimuyukmangay ngandumngayu
We’d pick the nuts together.

nyirringgotmangay bagluk
We’d put it in bags.

nyirrilirripunay
We sewed them.

nyirriwurgi'mangay na nyirrang
I worked there, we worked there, us
ngalNyalukmakmak binat fam
Nyaluk mob.

binatyek naBruceluk
Only peanuts at Bruce’s.

ngayongnanay arngula old Bruce
I was watching old Bruce.

ngalgarrangngakuwa there na all been
My mothers all died there, the others.
finish ngalwaywo

there now buwatjiwatjiyn
They are gone from there.

too muchi war welanglayingwayn
Where they threw (bombs) there, there
niyarnbay niyarnbay Katherine
where they call it Katherine Hospital.
hospital gawuyngaywayn

narnbay dunburam
He built a house there.

nagar'gar all together naganyangakuwa
All the old people, my uncles, your and
bla yunmi nabolo olabat
my people.

buwatjiwatjiyn niyarnbay gunbom
They disappeared from there because
of/with the bomb.

namarnakbom buynjungaywayn
The one they called “Bomb-Arm”, your
najartngiyngu naganyangaku ngarrk
father, my uncle.

yukga’nganay welangwatjiyiyn na
He went around, he’s gone now.

narnbay naletjanggi burrangmakan
They belong to the place, them, the old
nagar'gar
people.
Mick Madrill and Jack Gill - Phyllis Wiynjorrotj

[Audio: 20 PW Mick Madrill and Jack Gill]

Phyllis talks about some of the main people, locations and activities of her childhood. She begins by saying that the old Law, Aboriginal law, was very “hard”. She describes various things about the old ways that were difficult and dangerous: people used to spear each other; there were Barlamumu (Arnhemlanders) about who used to appropriate men’s wives; there was a lot of fighting over women. She mentions her father, Charlie Lamjorrotj: he was a police tracker, stationed at Maranboy and also at Mataranka at different times, who took the police around, Phyllis says, to do their work, and impose whitefella law. She mentions A.S. McColl, one of the policemen for whom her father worked (and who, like her father, was a member of expeditions to investigate murders at Caledon Bay in Arnhemland in the period 1932-4). Phyllis mentions having seen people chained at the police stations when she was a girl.

She names several of the white men who occupied stations and locations in the region when she was a child. There was Mick Madrill, who had a station called Alligator Hole (Nimarranyin), to the south of Beswick; and at Garndayluk (near present Barunga) was Jack Gill, who farmed there. Mick Madrill was “cheeky”, Phyllis says, and used to sneak up on his working boys when they went in to Maranboy. (Aboriginal report, including that of Phyllis, is that Madrill killed a number of Aboriginal people, although the scale of this is not clear.) Jack Gill, on the other hand, was a “good”, peaceful man. And at Maranboy itself was Dan Gillen, who ran the store, and who was known as “father” to both Phyllis and Sarah Flora, both of whom spent long periods of time at Maranboy with their families. Phyllis was born at Maranboy, and the country demarcated by Maranboy, Mataranka, and present Beswick and Barunga was what she considered her “father” country, and that of her clan, Bagala.

Phyllis often contrasted earlier times as “hard” with the present time following the establishment of “whitefella law” and Aboriginal people’s becoming citizens.

nabaywayn yanganbo gerrung wajitjijinnyay

Back then before when there was no citizenship.

bolkwirlangniyay

Custom (country) was hard.

nabay gurnjiwurnjin nabay jiji

That’s today, that citizenship.

whitefella wun gotmiyiyn

It’s become whitefella custom.

yanganbo nabay najartngaku navula Roper nen nabay nen navula nen Elsey nen navula nen navula nen Mataranka navula nen bungganaywayn navula Roper Hodgson Down

Before, my father used to go here to Roper, or Elsey or Mataranka, here to Roper or Hodgson Down.

wukanay najamorrwu yanganbo najartngaku

He took the policeman around, my father.
Before, not the policeman, he had one car, there was no bitumen there at Mataranka.

They’d go, they get (them), they’d load up, they’d - they'd spear each other, maybe the Barlamumu.

All the foreign people who were spearing each other.

When they were spearing each other, they’d toss the women’s bodies.

Just for nothing, in the grass.

That was before.

Today is white men’s way.

It’s whitefella custom, the country’s been changed.

Like whitefella’s law now.

Before they used to spear them (with no punishment).

They’d fall dead, women, boys, kids, girls, they’d fall dead on the open plain before.

That’s the way the policeman took them like this and shut them up.

They sat down for good.

Why did they go to Arnhemland? [said by FM]

My father, they - when they speared each other, they speared women and whitefellas.

True Aborigines speared each other and laid each other out, that's (why) my father went.
He loaded them up, he tied them up, and after he took them there to Mataranka, there behind the police station.

There lined up, they tied them to a tree like dogs.

That was a whitefella policeman. [in response to FM asking about McColl].

That McColl, my mother and father, they used to work there.

I was a child

I wasn’t big,

I was like this.

I lived there at the police station in a tent, I’d watch them there where they were tied up.

They carried big chains, they tied them up.

No good, things were hard, cousin.

All the Barlamunu were cheeky, and whitefellas were travelling.

They came from that way, tourists.

They took their women from them you know.

They slept with their women.

They chased them like this, maybe it was dawning and they chased them.

They speared them, the Aborigines did to the whites.

Here too at Maranboy, they speared them, the old Jawoyn.

But they’ve died now, no more.
His name was Lamjorrotj.

Our place is Wugarlarr (Beswick), that’s our place.

As for him, this Mick Madrill was just living here.

A cheeky whitefella too.

He had a station here.

But he’s died, we came here and sat down for good.

We did like that and we went.

There to the east, Dangdangjal (Tandangle).

There we went.

And then back (we came) for good and got (this) place.

My father and mother.

No, he lived here.

He lived here.

They made a house, he had a little station.

They had a big camp this way, this way to the west, no, north.

Here to the east.

They had a big camp there.

The working boys lived there.

Where they worked for him.

He would sneak up on them.

Maybe they came from there, from Mataranka.
When they just went bludging here for tobacco.

Old people, women.

He would sneak up on them like this here, (at/from?) the station.

He’d sneak up on them with a rifle.

He’d sneak up on them, watch them from the darkness, no.

“Oh yes,” he’d say.

That’s Mick Madrill.

That dangerous fella was here before.

As for him, Jack Gill was yonder downriver.

Downriver.

Jack Gill was good.

There lowdown, that old fella (place).

What is this place they call it, I’ve forgotten now.

Where the battery stands.

Garndayluk, yes! There now.

Yes, Jack Gill was living there.

Him, he was good.

But him, Mick Madrill (who) lived here, he was cheeky.

A murderer.

He’d sneak up on them, he’d watch them, his working boys.

When they just went there for tobacco, poor things!
When they went to their children, they’d go to them for tobacco. Because it was really hard (to get) tobacco. They hadn’t made that shop yet, white people, no. (That’s) today. The Maranboy shop. Old Dan Gillen was there, my father. He had the store there by the river. There now he kept a store. We’d go to that one this way, around this way. One place. Here was him, Mick Madrill. And Dan Gillen, him, he was living there. And Jack Gill (was) lowdown (downriver). Where the river runs lowdown here. Maybe he’s died (Mick Madrill), cousin. Later I’ll try to ask, I’ll ask Margaret, who was that (with whom) we were all camping here? I mean, who’s that one, who’s that, Betty’s husband. I’ll ask him after. Bapuy, ngamayang (skin), yes.
narnbay ngajawan gerru

I’ll ask him later.

nabay gerrung warrungganay workin boy ngayuluk

They didn't go to his working boys.

bonnangarananay

He looked after them.

gun'ba wurru nabalaywu warrunggan buynjungay

“They might go from there close up,” they said.

sugar gok namenngayu bega warroonbulerrlakwon

“They might go to them for sugar,” he thought.

workin boy ngaku jungay narnbay mam Mick Madrill

“My working boys,” he said that whitefella Mick Madrill.

bonlakwonay na Jack Gill all right never been nabaranggu thatun there good man

He used to catch them up, Jack Gill was never cheeky, that one was a good man.

nalekumorro thatun

He was nice that one.

niyarnbay darra bumbiwrugi'may yanganbo nagar'gar allabat been die na

They used to work for him there, all those old people have died.

buwelangjoyoiyn buwatjiwatjiyiyn

They’ve died, they’ve disappeared.

arnbay darra na Mick Madrillluk niyarngula darra buwarnwatjiwatjiyiyn nagar'gar ngalgar'gar

These ones here too at Mick Madrill’s, they've gone, the old men and women.

ngayimakan nivula police station wurgi'may Maranboy boyn

As for him, he worked here at the Maranboy police station, that’s all (her father).

nijirriyn

One place.

niyarnbay ngajuy

There I -

buwarnga'nganay

They would come along.

well najamorrwu been wanna jawangu bla allabat

Well the policeman would ask them.

you wanna work, bonjungay

“You wanna work?” he’d say to them.

yowoyn buynjungay

“Yes,” they’d say.

ngalgarrangngaku najartngaku

My mother and father.
They’d come here to Mick Madrill and go there to Jack Gill.

They’d see them, but that Mick Madrill was cheeky.

He went (around) with a rifle.

He’d sneak up on them.

With wurrk I mean rifle.

He would shoot them.

Some died.

He’d sneak up on them, they’d hide.

They’d already heard.
“Your uncle”, Phyllis says to me (FM), “my father, brought me to Pine Creek when I was a child. My mother, ngal-Worawurri (clan), was there too (see story ‘Mother’s Place’).”

Phyllis’ father said to her mother, “You stay here, I’m going back” to near Pine Creek, “I saw a devil.”

The “devil”, it turns out, was his sister, who was minding nanny goats in the vicinity for a white man. (Recall, story Grandpa Bamjuga, that Phyllis’ father’s family originated from somewhere in the Pine Creek area, and seem to have had various continuing attachments there, perhaps to white employers as well as to countrymen). Phyllis says she was a big girl when she heard this.

“That devil is my emu,” her father said, “I want to spear it. That spirit is my emu, herding nanny goats.”

“I was a big girl,” repeats Phyllis, “and I said to him, “Hey, that’s my auntie, you can’t spear her.”

He was ashamed. “Your uncle (to FM) said to me, “You’ve made me ashamed.””

“That’s my sister-in-law,” said my mother; “and my auntie” (Phyllis said).

“For emu, I want to spear her for emu,” he said.

“You won’t do anything,” my mother said, “this Ngamatjulo (Phyllis) is watching you. Put your woomera down.”

Phyllis explains: they used to spear women before (she also mentions older men spearing young ones), “for emu”. The men wanted to be good hunters, able to spear many different kinds of animals. The country was “hard”: bolk-wirlang, in other words, the old Law was hard. How did they become good hunters? “With my own eyes, I watched my father,” Phyllis says. “I asked my grandmother about it too, and she explained it to me: they want to become good hunters, it’s about getting waral “spirit”, the old people would give it to them. Their hearts were burning (so much did they want to become good hunters). So they would spear a woman, and then they could get all kinds of game.” Phyllis referred to such hunters having waral ni-gorlo-burrag “on their backs”, and sometimes translated it in English as “power”. She used mam to refer to the physical remains of the dead (for example, with reference to the pieces of bone or body part that men would carry in small dilly bags, jerr, around their necks), as well as to the soul, spirit or what we might think of as the immaterial aspects of the dead.

Phyllis laughs a little towards the end of her explanation – I was clearly just catching on to what she meant, as she may have noticed. “No good one,” she says of those old practices. She mentions how she used to study her father to figure out what he was thinking and doing.

ngarrk jamba najartngaku Like me, my father,

like naganyangiyngu Your uncle.

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13 Phyllis refers to her own father as “your uncle” because of my skin relationship to her; we called each other jarrmunggin “cousin”.
You say “uncle”, me, I call him “father”.

They took me as a kid here to Pine Creek.

He said to his wife, your auntie.

(Of) Worawurri (clan), who’s gone (died).

My mother, who’s passed away.

He said, “you stay here,” he said.

To his wife.

“You stay here, I saw a devil,” he said.

When they were coming from Pine Creek, they were going back.

She was talking to the nanny goats, my auntie, poor thing.

Your mother.

She was minding the nanny goats yonder at Pine Creek.

For whom?

For a whitefella.

There, she was working at Pine Creek.

She went.

“Stay here” -- a car is running.

It might ruin it for us.

“Stay.”

“Stay here, I saw a spirit,”

He said to his wife.
Like to your auntie, my father (said).
I was a big child.
What was happening…
“This spirit is for my emu.”
“When I spear it,” he said.
To his wife, like to your auntie.
“I want to spear it, it’s my spirit going,” he said, taking the nanny goats.
“No.”
Me, I was big.
“Hey! That’s my auntie, leave her, you can't spear her,” I said.
He was ashamed.
“She’s made me ashamed,” my father said.
Your uncle.
“Why are you chasing my auntie?” I said.
Yes, I knew language too.
Her, her sister-in-law also, no (disappeared).
“You won’t do it.”
“That's my sister-in-law.”
Said my mother.
“Leave her.”
She said, “no.”
“For emu, I want to spear her,” he said.
“No, you won’t do anything.”

“Because this Ngamutjulo (skin) is watching you.”

She said.

“No, I want to spear her, for emu,” he said.

“No, leave off,” she said.

To your auntie.

“Put down your woomera!”

He put the woomera on his leg, the spear.

She grabbed it.

He left off.

He didn’t chase his sister anymore, no.

He left her for good.

He didn’t spear her, no.

His wife made him ashamed.

That was for emu.

Emu, game, they used to spear before.

When they used to spear women.

When they used to spear them, that was for emu.

For emu, for kangaroo.

They became good hunters, the old men.

Maybe for emu, maybe they saw sugarbag in the open, or they saw turkey in the open, for that, the old men.
Maybe they saw sugarbag in the open, or cattle, or they saw a pig, or maybe blackfella in the open and speared them.

Hard law.

They always hunted women and young men when they speared them, when they made them die.

For their emu, their what’s it, the spirit gave them.

They gave (it) to them.

They became good hunters now, good hunter.

They went “no good” (dangerous), the old people.

Me, our grandfather Bamjuga told me.

He told me, he talked to me.

My father too, I saw it myself.

With my own eye, you know, when I watched my father.

Which way his mind works, my father on his own, before.

I asked my grandmother.

I asked his mother.

“No, your father’s going this way.”

“They want to spear (someone) for emu,” she said.

“For game,” she said.
arnbay

That kind.

gunmam waral

With a spirit, a soul.

nabay waral mam nabay

That soul that's a spirit.

nawaral nabay bonburndaynbunay
nagar'gar nabay durrku

They speared them, the old men (did that) for emu.

bonbuwelangwonay

They gave (it) to them.

nabay nagar'gar

The old people.

bonbuwelangwonay durrku na

They gave (it) to them for emu.

arnbay bonburndaynbunay

They speared them (like that).

nganngudu buwelangbornanay gilkan

They were burning inside, their hearts.

yo ngadaynbun nawula buynjungay
nawula ngalmuka

“Yes, I’ll spear this one,” they said, “this woman.”

yo nawula nibarlatj welangganay lay
durrk gurkwaywo

Yes, and he’d go into an open place, kangaroo, emu, python and all kinds.

ngeyawaywo benukwaywo nibarlatj
welangganay

What’s it, turkey and all kinds went into the open.

narnbay nagar'gar buynjungay
najeynJawoyn

The old men did that, the further Jawoyn.

buwatjiwatjiyiyn na

They’ve gone now.
Melkjarlumbu (my country) – Beswick Falls - Phyllis Wiynjorrotj

[Audio: 22 PW Melkjarlumbu]

Phyllis talks about a place called Melkjarlumbu, or Beswick Falls, a big Arnhem rock pool and waterfall located in Beswick Station. “My father is burying the water here,” she says, meaning that the sandbank is growing and the water pool becoming smaller. This is her father’s country, and she says her father, and her brother, have come back here as spirits, and they are covering over the water.

She confirms that she has seen the water level changing, and she thinks it is her father’s spirit, her brother’s spirit and her grandfather’s spirit, who are causing the sand bank to become larger and encompass the water.

*buwurrngaku yowoyn* My dreaming.

*gabornewatjiyindin na, gabornewetjang nabay najartngaku* The water is disappearing, my father is burying the water.

*langgingaku bunggoyiyn jiulpurrang* (And) my brother, they went back as spirits.

*niyarnbay batduwunluk* There to the cave.

*jiulpurrang* Their spirits.

*gawelanggetjang nen* He’s burying it, maybe.

*ngangangay ngadongmay niyarnbay ngabolkyolkyolkmaayn wakay* I went, I cried, I talked to the country.

*bolkbrekjiyn yo* The country has gone bad.

*gula nen namorangaku langgingaku bunggoyinay najartngaku bunggoyinay jiulpurrang ngajuy nament ngarrkmakann ngadongmaaayn gerrung wanganbuynjawam nawulawu* “Maybe my father’s father and brother went back, my father, their spirits went back,” I thought to myself; I cried. They didn’t ask me about this.

*walknyiwuwa* Our children (didn’t).

*ngadongmaaayn boyn* I cried, that's all.

*ngabolkyolkyolkmaaayn yo nawula nen gatetjang ngajuy nament ngarrkmakan* I talked to the country. “Yes, maybe he’s burying it,” I thought to myself.

*jadun na* That one now.

*might be you and me* Maybe our...
Our grandfathers, your uncle, went back, they went back as spirits.

There.

They returned there as spirits.

For good.

They give children, and they bury the water there.

What they call “waterfall”, I call Melkjarlumbu.

They’re burying it now.

For good, the water won’t come out again.

I saw the place, I talked to it, I cried, I was crying in my heart.

Yes, my father and my grandfather.

And my brother, they’ve gone back as shades, their shades.

I said, I told them.

I talked to them, my kids, our kids.

“Yes,” they said.

“The sand is going back there into the ‘pocket’.”

It’s retreating into the cave.

I kept looking at the place. “Yes, nothing,” I thought to myself there (it will not return to the way it was).
Crocodile used to have fire. He kept it for himself all the time. People asked him for it but he wouldn’t give it to them.

At last betelerrelerre (jacana, a bird sometimes called ‘lily trotter’) got it from him. He took it and made off with it.

So crocodile went into the water. “I’m going into the water, betelerrelerre,” he said. “I’m going under, you stay up above the water.”

You know that place at Mataranka, where the race course is, called Mulgarn? That’s where he danced, that betelerrelerre, he made that country.

Before, people used to eat meat raw when they had no fire. Now they roast their meat, and that’s good, cousin.

goymarr narnbay welanglerrbitbum  
narnbay wurrk meya  
Crocodile stole the fire away, the firestick.

meya yowoyn  
Firestick, yes.

welanglerrbitbum  
He stole it.

narnbay welangmakwoy na  
He made things as they are.

yanganbo gok nayung’yunggi  
Before, the ancestors.

gerrungwayn yanganbo wanyirrinanay  
wakay  
Before, we didn’t see (how this happened), no.

warnjungay  
He kept on like that.

ngayiwa garriyay genduyay  
He had it, he kept it himself.

wakay gerrung warronwonay  
He didn’t give it to them.

bongaywum  
He kept it from them.

yowoyn wurrku  
Yes, about fire.

buynjawanaaay wakay gerrung  
warronwoy  
They asked, no, he didn’t give it to them.

jangarla  
All the time.

welangjangarla narnbay goymarr  
welangwukangay jangarla  
Forever, that crocodile carried it all the time.

yenang wurra nabay wangbay  
What animal/bird was it?
Yes, jacana.
Jacana got it.
He took it from him and ran.
That’s it.
And he put himself in the country at Mataranka.
That’s it.
That football ground they have, no race course.
The race course at Mulgarn.
Where they call it Mulgarn.
That’s where it danced (the jacana/bird).
It went and made the country.
That jacana is “number one”.
No, him, he went into the water forever.
As for him, crocodile, he said, “I’ll become an animal.”
“Me, I’ll go in the water,” he said.
“You, jacana, you go on top.”
“With fire,” he said.
The old people used to say that before, the old people.
Yes, their roasted meat, that flying fox and all, they roasted before.
It made the place (as it is).
Before they used to eat raw meat.
yanganbo

Before.

gurnjiwurnjin nyirrang bolmankwoy
naleku gula waykanba

Yes, as for us, he made the country (as it is), and it’s good like this on top.

yowoyn nabay brerku gurnjiwurnjin nabay
najolang gawuynjarra na

Yes, that (was) bad, today people eat cooked meat.

Gawuynjangbenben, leku jarrmunggin

They roast it, that’s good cousin.
Phyllis speaks here about one of her favourite topics: collecting yams, the women storing them in net bags as they moved along, then bringing the yams home and slicing them with kangaroo shoulder blade. For cheeky yams, it was necessary to make a bed of grass and put the yams to soak overnight in running water so the toxins were removed. She also mentions the kinds of yams that needed this treatment. As usual, she makes a comparison between earlier times and the present, observing that now people eat white man’s tucker: they have given up the kinds of food preparation she is talking about.

ngalgar’gar nabay bulakwonay yawk bunggurriritjmangay gunbareeeeee nanbamngayu bunggotmangaaay bunggurriritjmangaaay arnbayen larruk buwelangbunguy

The old ladies got that, they dug cheeky yam with a yam stick, they put the bulb (down), dug, then they got paperbark.

buwelangnetbunay gunggeyabutbut burndokbunay ngandurnngayu

They got it, they carried it on their hips with kurrajong (string). They cut the string.

buwelangnetbunay gunlarruk

They carried it (yams) with paperbark.

arnbay durn bumakwonay ngeya butbut

They made string with what’s it, kurrajong.

nabay niberemelk bunggotmay niwula

They put it on their shoulder (blade) here.

bunethunaywayn

They carried it.

bunethunay bulerrkoyinay nawun

They carried it and brought it home.

buwelangjangbenay

They roasted it.

buwelangmangay larruk naway

They got another paperbark.

anbay beremelk ngeya lay gupu, anberemelknayu narnbay bumakwonay

The shoulder blade of what’s it, kangaroo, plains kangaroo, they made it from that.

burndokbunaaaaay bul

They cut it, finished.

nabay darrar marrk arngulawu marrk burndokbunay

And they cut this grass.

bunggotmangay layn layn layn

They put down a branch, branch, branch.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jawoyn</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>bunggotmangay all right marrk bulku</em></td>
<td>They put it, all right, grass in the middle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bunggotmangay</em></td>
<td>They put it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>niyarnbay buwelandgotmangay narnbay nangeyangayu na yawk</em></td>
<td>They put it there, the what’s it, cheeky yam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bunggotmangay narnbay nekjiyay</em></td>
<td>They put it and soaked it there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dirlmangay warnbayen bulakwonay namayamayakniyay na gerrung walbarang’barangniyay nabay</em></td>
<td>It would dawn, and then they fetched it. It was mellow, there was no cheekiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gunjarrang because warlarrkmangaywayn</em></td>
<td>Because the current washed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gabornalowmamangwayn gok arnbay na</em></td>
<td>When the water runs, that’s it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>welangmayamayakwonay na galowmamangwayn narnbay jarrang nanwalk</em></td>
<td>It made it mellow, when it runs, that little current.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gawarlarrkmamang gok</em></td>
<td>It washes it, that’s it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>anbarang’barang galayiyi gun</em></td>
<td>It drives (throws) the cheekiness away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ngarrk ngajuyung nabarang’barang boyn</em></td>
<td>Me, I say, “barang’barang”,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>no more nganbarwarngayu</em></td>
<td>Not “barwar.”¹⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ngarrk one way ngajuyung, nganbarang’barang, cheeky one, him chuckim flood water him clean im out, makeim like smooth one, nganmayamayak him makeim, like good one</em></td>
<td>Me, I say it one way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>namarlaworrberndak</em></td>
<td>Big leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>him nabarang’barang too</em></td>
<td>It’s cheeky too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gula gabamjuyungwayn</em></td>
<td>Like this, where the tuber/bulb is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>yenang wurrab nabay maybay ngawelangngengawum</em></td>
<td>What is that tucker, I’ve forgotten the name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Yowoyn nganditjkan.gu narnbaywu</em></td>
<td><em>Nganditjkan.gu</em> (a large yam), that one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>narnbay nabarang’barang</em></td>
<td>That’s cheeky.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁴ This form is used by Jawoyn speakers of northern origin in addition to *barang* for cheekiness, toxin.
They dug it, cooked it, pounded it, cooked it, pounded it, the cheekiness went out now.

It became mellow, that ditjgala yam or what’s this, ngan-ditjgan.gu.

They made a damper of it, like what’s it chewing gum, they made a damper.

And they scolded them after, the old ladies scolded the kids, they took it away and ate it.

That’s a long time ago, they ate it, not now.

They eat whiteman’s tucker now.
Phyllis talks about hunting flying foxes, distinguishing the big black variety (*goynbam*) from the smaller reddish ones (*burrirt*). She talks about people preparing the long sticks (*bambarlun*) used for hunting flying foxes, and comments that now, people hunt them with rifles, stones and slingshots – but they didn’t before. She also talks briefly about stunning fish with poison, mentioning a certain eucalypt that was used for the purpose.

*yanganbo jurritjba woyal gurumal yenang wurra darra nawulabay*  
Before, white currant, black plum, green plum, and what’s this (other).

*yiwungwaywo*  
Black currant.

*walay'mangay jamba*  
It hung down like,

*nagurukguruk weynjiyay jamba jarritj*  
It hung down, black like charcoal.

*guyiyn'gu gawelangngeyarra jarrmunggin*  
Like this time (season), it’s what’s it, cousin.

*might be namalnguy this way look gun*  
Might be a lot this way, look there.

*nawula bala gabolkBeswick ngamayngan but I no more gottim moticar nalekumorro nganbibrekjiyn now toomuchi*  
Well, there’s Beswick here. I’d like to go there but I don’t have a good car, mine is broken down.

*Boyn brekjiyn*  
Finished, it broke down.

*narnbay nabrown one ngakurlung*  
That brown one is mine.

*but welangbrekjiyn*  
But it’s broken down.

*brekjiyn gilkan*  
It’s gone bad inside.

*waya waywo*  
The wires and all.

*gawelanglorrorr'mamang (him slack)*  
It’s slack.

*gerru guwarrk narnbay weynjiyaywayn bumburroywayn narnbay bonbuwelangbunaywayn*  
But after when that was hanging down, when they were sleeping, when they killed them.

*gerru borrworr'milinay yoynluk*  
After they fell down on the ground.

*gunbambarlun now*  
With a stick now.
Today with a rifle and shotgun.

The black flying fox (that) hangs at the Katherine River there, the black ones.

That’s goynbam.

The big ones are black.

Burritt, that’s the little ones.

They would kill those too with the long stick.

Before, but today they strike them with slingshots, the young boys.

They hit them with stones.

But not before.

That long bambarlun (hunting stick) (is what) they hit them with before.

They hit them with a long bambarlun and they’d swing the stick.

They’d swipe them.

Today they have rifles, they kill them with rifles.

They shoot them with rifles today.

That, that’s a whitefella thing.

But blackfella way, it was hard, blackfella way they got this stick.

They made spears.

They made bamboo spears for game.
They speared them, today it’s whitefella way.

They hit them with stones.

They hit them with sticks.

Bambarlun.

That thing they call bambarlun.

Yes, I tell you.

They call it bambarlun, a really long stick (like) that yonder.

That’s it.

In the morning like this he might get up, they do or they did before, the old people.

“Let’s get them quick,” and they stripped a bambarlun and went, they shinned like a frog (up the tree).

They crouched, and as for it, it snored, that flying fox.

But then they hit it.

They swiped it and after it tumbled down.

Before, the old people (did) that, but not today, they shoot them.

They shoot them now.

The slingshot is recent (today).

The slingshot is recent.

Before, I tell you, that bambarlun, they cut it, they put short ones (sticks), the old people.
They cut it, the young boys cut it.

They cut it, put, put, put, in the morning maybe they’d get up like this and chase after them, game, that flying fox.

They hit them, they bashed them.

With sticks.

Short ones.

What they call bambarlun, that's the really long ones.

They just chased them while they were sleeping and throw!

They put it, the what’s it, flying fox would tumble down on the ground.

They threw it, they hit them with that long stick bambarlun.

They just hit them with short ones like that.

They bashed (them).

Short ones, those short sticks, they bashed (them).

For flying fox or goanna, before.

But today they shoot them with rifles.

No, before they used to poison (them).

They cut branches.

They cut that what’s it, garnbak (woollybutt tree).
Tricksters and Traditions

nabay bumarrwonay bunekjangay wakluk
They poisoned (with that), they soaked it in water.

nabay darra marrk bumangaywayn layn burndokbunaywayn nabay bunekjangaywayn
And when they got grass and cut it, and soaked it.

nabay marr namarr
That poison, poison.

yanganbo bunggotmangay
Before, they used to put it.

bumburroy
They slept.

ngangonngekarrrawul bulakwonay
In the morning they went to it.

bunanay gadarlan
They saw it (fish) was floating.

nabay giyowk ngayimakan darlanay yanganbo nabay buynjungay nagar’gar
As for it, the fish, it was floating, they used to do that before, the old people.

dumlarrmangay yowoyn
It burned their eyes.

martbiyn nen nabay
Maybe barramundi.

jumarrak nen nabay
Or Long Tom.

danbukarr nen nabay
Or perchlet.

narnbay darlanay
Was floating.

nabay gurnjiwurnjin nabay waitbalawun nabay durnwukangay
Today, that’s whitefella way, (they) brought fishing line.

narnbay gawulayi durn
They throw a line.

yanganbo bat nabay burrangmakan marrk
Before though, them, (they used) grass.

I catchim bla you marrk bynby jarrmunggin I show you gerru walbujjang
I’ll get grass for you later cousin, and I’ll show you.

I look about bla you
I’ll look around for you.

nabay winja bumakwonay
They made spears.

ngeya gok winja barrakarl bumakwonay
What’s it, spears, they made bamboo spears.

Ginba bumakwonay nangeya nadilkdilk
Some… made what’s it, sharpened (points).
Bush tucker - Phyllis Wijnjorrotj 153

narnbay winja narnbay
buynjumurrkmangay gula buynjungay

(With) spears they would spear/pierce, they’d do like this.

buynjumurrkmangay bumangay narnbay giyowk

They’d pierce and we’d get the fish.

nabay darra warnbarlarr darra nabay bumarrwonay

That was one thing, and (also) they'd use poison.

bumarrwonay bulayiyaay nanwikngayu
laynwaywo buynjongay bulayiyaay
marlaworr bulayiyaay warnbayen
ngangonngegkarrawul

They poisoned (them), they'd throw the tree bark, they'd throw the leaves, they'd throw it and then in the morning.

ngekuwan bumburroy
ngangonngegkarrawul yi' buynjungay

At night they'd sleep, and in the morning they'd get up.

bunanay guwarrk gangeya gadarlan

They saw … well what’s it, they were floating.

nabay giyowk

The fish.

nabay buwelangdipmangay ngalga'gar
naga'gar

So the old ladies and men would "bogey" (bathe).

nawalkwalkanlukku buwelangguklayiyay

And the children too, would throw the (fish) bodies.

ginba nganyuk buynjopmangay bulayiyaay
na

Some they grabbed alive and threw them (out).

yanganbo nabay

That was before.

boyn

That’s all.

gerru nabay buwarlarrkmangay

After they washed (them).

nabay nabaranggu buwarlarrkmangay
bunggotmangay ginba

They washed the toxins (off) and put it, some of them.

guwarrk ginba nagar'gar yanganbo nabay
bengiamoyamorlk buyalwunay

But some old people before just cooked them as they were.

gerrung nabarang'barang warruynjungay
wakay

They (the fish) weren't cheeky/bitter.

jamorlk bularray'mangay or
buynjangbenay

They just cooked them (in ashes) or roasted them.

narnbay buynjay nagar'gar

The old people ate it.
The old ladies have gone.

And today as well.

The young men today still camp.

They still cook in ashes.

They just cook in ashes.

Some(times) they roast in a ground oven.

They roast for their grannies.

Also on the coals, in the ground oven.

Yes.
Phyllis talks about the various ways and places in which you could find water, especially when you were away from river systems. You could dig in the sand, creating a soakage, and let the water bubble up. You could let a good amount bubble up, and then dip it up with a billycan.

Not only could you get water from soakages like that, but also from roots of a kind of ti tree called *gulitjban*. They would split the tree root, which grew on high ground, and water would spurt out. They would store water in dilly bags made for the purpose. Another kind of small-leaved ti tree, called *betj*, grows along rivers and that was also a source of water. Sometimes this sort of water was used to flavor foods being cooked in leaves in ground ovens.
Where the flood water/current runs on the rocks. (in response to how to find water up high)

When it falls, you get water.

That’s different from underneath, you put that water in paperbark maybe.

When you put it in paperbark,

That’s when you dig it, after you sit, the water boils up from underneath.

From underneath.

It boils up, we get the water.

With a billycan we boil tea now.

The old people used to do it before.

The old people used to do that before.

When they dug water.

In the ground,

And in trees too.

That’s gulitjban.

They call that gulitjban, cousin.

They split it, and the water squirted out from that gulitjban.

It spurted out.

They put that what’s it, that dilly bag before, they made paperbark, they tied it up and put it.
nagar'gar

The old people,

borna jurrrmarkaay bornagot mambartluk

They poured the water, put it in the billy.

ginba bumbornaworkmangay gulawayn buynjangganay nagar'gar ngalgar'gar

Sometimes they drank water this way, they hunted, the old people.

arnbay na gulitjban

That’s gulitjban.

bornabartmiwunay like bornayi'menay

It spurted, like the water came out.

narnbay gilkanba

From underneath,

nabay ngayimakan yoynba

From underground.

yowoyn

Yes. 15

narnbaywu bumakwonay

They made something for that.

ginba nabaywu marlaworr bunggotmangay

Sometimes they put leaves for that.

marlaworr bunggotmay narnbay barang’barangwonay

They put leaves and that made (it) tasty.

arnbay giyowk buynjbangbenaywayn lay

When they cooked fish or meat in a ground oven.

buwelangjay narnbay

They ate that.

nabay gulitjban wak nangengayu

The name of that water is gulitjban.

nabay betj nabay waykawaykan ganamjiiyiwayn gun

That betj is the one that stands way high up there.

no more ngangarlarr but gun waykanba

Not on the river, but high up.

arnbay gulitjban

That's gulitjban.

waykanmarrk ganamjiyi

It stands way up high.

betj nabay nawula ngayimakan ngan.garlarr

As for betj, that’s here, that’s riverine.

nabay gulitjban ngayimakan waykan

As for gulitjban, that’s high up.

15 This was in response to a suggestion by FM that salt was obtained from a certain leaf.
Phyllis talks about earlier practices of exchanging and trading, called *bulk* in general. Spears, but also many other things, were traded to other groups of people. Trading was associated with carrying corroborees (song and dance styles) of various kinds to them — *wangga*, or *walaka*, or *bonorlo* — and of sending and receiving boys for initiation.

Now — as she often said — people don’t do this anymore, these practices of exchange have lapsed. People have forgotten language too, she adds, as she often did — often to the discomfort of those around her.

*nabay bulk yowoyn* 
That trade, yes.

*yowoyn bulk marak bunjarrkbunay* 
Yes, they always sent trade goods.

*bujnjarrkbunay marak bulk* 
They always sent trade goods.

*Daly River navula nen Oenpelli navula nen Roper navula nen Elsey navula nen Hodgson Downs buynjungay* 
To Daly River here, or maybe Oenpelli, or Roper here, or Elsey, or Hodgson Downs.

*buwoyinay yanganbo nagar’gar bulk* 
The old people used to give each other trade goods.

*girlirrkwaywo* 
Swag and all.

*yowoyn* 
Yes.

*winjawaywo buwoyinay* 
Spears and all they gave each other.

*yanganbo bonyi gerrung waitbalawu walniyay wakay* 
Long ago, whitefellas weren’t here, no.

*yawkyek narnbay jamburlyek yanganbo buynjay* 
Only cheeky yam and long yam, they used to eat before.

*garderre jonggo batji narnbaywuyek* 
Long and short-nosed and ground sugarbag, only this.

*yanganbo but wakay na gurnjin* 
Before, but not today.

*buwaitbala’burayiyn navulawu naturralurra nawalkwalkan gawumerendenwayn niyargula* 
They’ve become whitefellas, this last generation, the children who gather here.
niyarngula

buwelangngawum ngani

yowoyn

bulk darra gerrung warruwonwon, warruwoyindin

yowoyn najorr bungganay nabay nen wanglea nen walaka nen bonorlo nen buwukanay nabay buwukanay nagar'gar yanganbo

bonbumbiwukanay

bonbumbigarramangay

nabaywayn bonbulakayen'wonay

mululuk

yowoyn

winja buwukanay boko bunggorrkanay narnbay buwoyinay

arnbay boyn

Here.

They’ve forgotten language.

Yes.

They don’t give trade goods, don’t exchange.

Yes, they used to go on foot, take maybe wangga or walaka, or bonorlo (song styles), that’s what the old people took.

They took it for them.

They got songs for them.

When they made them young men.

Initiands.

Yes.

They took spears, carried wooden spears and gave it to each other.

That’s all.
Spears - Phyllis Wiynjorrotj

[Audio: 28 PW Spears]

_Nalawkgarrarakan_ was an ethnonym, a word used for those who made stone spears (lawk means “stone spear point”); they got the shafts and mounted the spear tips. They got wax; they made string from kurrajong. Small, light spears are called _mayarr_, to which spear points were tied on with kurrajong string. They also made other kinds of bamboo spears (for which the generic term is _barrakarl_), such as _goray_. They used to make spear prongs from ironwood, cutting it from the roots. Those points would stay on, they were really strong.

(The term _na-lawk-garrarakan_ was almost always used by Phyllis, Peter, Sandy and others to refer to people as if to the north of us who were usually located at Barunga or Katherine, but it is not clear how specific its regional reference may have been).

_nalawkgarrarakan nabay ngayimakan_  
_nagar'gar warngotmiyin narnbay_  
_nalawkgarrarakan gawuynjuyungwayn_  

_Lawkgarrarakan_, as for that, the old people were that way, what they called _lawkgarrarakan_.

_wijnawayn bumakwonay bumayangay_  

When they made spears, they fitted points to them.

_beriwayn bumangay garderre jonggo batji_  

And wax is what they got, of different sorts of bees, ground sugarbag.

_anarnbaywu bumakwonay_  

That’s what they made.

_but lil bumakwonay nabay ngeya butbut_  

But they made string out of what’s it, kurrajong.

_bumboynjangay_  

They wove it.

_arnbay bumborrortmangay_  

That’s what they tied it up with.

_buwirlang’wonay_  

They made it strong.

_narnbay buyamiynay narnbay mayarr darra nabay gawuynjuyungwayn mayarr nawalkwalkan_  

That’s what they speared each other with, that small spear, what they call _mayarr_ are small ones.

_bunggotmangay nabay burndilkmakwonay_  

They put it (on) and they sharpened it.

_yikarr_  

_Cypress pine._

_burndilkmakwonay got_  

They sharpened it and put it on.

_borrorr buynjungay gunbutbut_  

They tied it with kurrajong.
The point.

And that became really hard.

They speared each other with what’s it, with mayarr.

With spears, (and) bamboo spears.

Maybe that goray.

They had that.

They speared each other.

Yes, they made the point.

They cut the what’s it, I’ve forgotten, what’s the name of it?

Yes, to do that, for that they made it, what’s it all, today they get that whitefella thing, a bar.

Where they made a flat bar and they cut it.

That (was) before, the old people have gone, they had that.

They just made it (spears) out of wood.

Only wood.

Just bamboo.

The prongs, that they cut from ironwood.

They cut the ironwood at its roots.

They cut the prong and cut it now, before they used to cut it with a stone spear, finished.

They cut it, a prong, and (another) prong.
narnbay bulerryamiyinay nagar'gar ngalgar'gar
That’s what they speared each other with, old people.

buwarnyamangay
They speared.

nayawurriyn nen nabay bonbuyamangay
They speared the young fellows maybe.

gunarnbaywu
In order to,

nabaywayn gerrung
warrumbrikgalkmangay wakay
And that’s the one, the point didn’t come out, no.

briklatjiyinay nabay ngayimakan
The point stuck in tightly.

yowoyn nawirlangwirlang nabay ngayimakan
Yes, that was really strong.

buwelangdokbunay gunlawk
burndurnburanay burndutjmangay narnbay
They cut it with a stone-tipped spear and made a string, they pounded it.
Phyllis describes how people used to settle scores, especially before any major ritual performance. People would get their spear bundles, and paint up with white paint. They would punish people who had committed wrongs in the preceding period, making them come out into the middle of a “ring place” to take physical punishment. The word for this is *gulum-bu-* “hit in the ring”, where *ngan-gulum* is a ring-place or ceremony ground.

Although Phyllis talks about this as a general rule, she also has in mind a particular episode, which as she indicates, she and Sarah Flora experienced when they were young girls. A large (Gunabibi) ceremony was held at a place called Gorrnggorngbay, near what was then the large, teeming series of camps at Maranboy. Apparently there was a considerable settling of scores before this ceremony went ahead. We visited the area of Gorrnggorngbay a number of times, steering clear of the ceremony ground, which Phyllis and others of her generation regarded as sacred.

- **bonbunggulumbunay**: They punished them in the ring place.
- **nabaywayn bonbubunay bulkitj**: Like when they fought with them a lot.
- **bonbujumurrkmayn bonbuyamangaywayn**: They speared them, they speared them.
- **nabay bunggulumlakwonay bunamjiyay**: They went to the ring place, they stood up.
- **nagar'gar**: The old men.
- **nigulum**: On the ring place.
- **winja bunggarriyay buynjarrgarriyay**: They had spears, they had a bundle.
- **bim gula buworldbuyinay gun boyn**: They painted themselves with white paint there, finished.
- **narnbay nawelang nagar'gar**: The correct (way), the old people.
- **gerrung warruyern'mangay wakay**: They weren’t afraid, no.
- **ngajuyung gurnjiwurnjin wakay**: I say, today nothing (like that).
- **gawelangyern'mamang**: (They) are afraid.
- **ngananay ngawonnanay nagar'gar buworrombokayinay narrgula Gorrnggorngbay nawun**: I saw, I saw them, the old men went after each other this way at Gorrnggorngbay.
They speared each other there, the old men, on account of women, or wrong skin business, man or woman, they finished each other off there, they speared each other at Gorrnggorrngbay.

Sarah was a young girl and I was too.

We went (around) together.

There on the other side of Gorrngorrngbay, (at) Maranboy.

They speared each other on the open.

Yes, they followed each other for Gunabibi, the enforcers caught up with each other and speared each other.

There Gorrngorrngbay.
A curlew sings out – and so people have an inkling that someone might be coming. The bird sits in the tree and sings, “guwelu guwelu guwak”. Maybe a snake crawls, something is moving. That person is sneaking up.

People sit up into the night, they sit without a fire and watch out. “There’s nothing there,” they say finally, “let’s sleep.” Maybe they’ll look for the track in the morning. Worrk, the enforcer, moves stealthily, you can’t see him. He comes juram – like a “soldier”. Maybe in the past somebody did something wrong, or maybe his father or mother or uncle did something wrong. The enforcer comes, comes and deals with such a person. That’s worrk, an enforcer; juram, like a soldier, that “hard law” of the past.

But, Phyllis draws a comparison: that is different from nagalk. Nagalk is a sorcerer, somebody who comes secretly, you can’t see him, and his purpose is different and not accountable. Worrk is someone who’s coming to exact retribution for some previous wrong. She provides a word of close or similar meaning to worrk, juram, and translates it as “soldier”. This kind of action is punitive but out in the open.

gangan.gar guluwurr  Curlew talks.
gula gangan.gar gula nen wang gananan  It talks like this, maybe it sees an animal.
nen  Maybe.
lay nen gabayayang gula nen lungarrk  Maybe an animal is crawling like this, gabayayang maybe a snake is crawling.
gula nen mungguy  “Maybe a blackfella is sneaking up on us.”
nyanbunnggalklakwon.gon

ythey likey that  That’s what they say.
get up   Get up.
gawuyi’menmen gawuwelangyongnanan  They get up, they watch it.
nal ngawumbudiyi na wurrkmiyn  They sit without a fire.
gawuwelanggarlayakyongnanan  They watch the dark.
ngangarlayak  Like that dark one.
ngangarlayak gawuyongnanaan  They watch the dark.
“Yes, nothing, let’s sleep,” they say.

“Later in the morning we’ll go.”

“We’ll try to find the track, maybe they turned like this,” they say.

The curlew goes “guwelu guwelu guwelu wakwak.”

Sometimes a blackfella is coming as “soldier” from far off.

That’s an “enforcer”, a dangerous person.

Where they used to go.

They chase the sorcerer and he hides in a tree.

He doesn’t go in the open.

He might appear to you, he hides from you.

He hides from them.

They go, they don’t see him in the tree, they go up (in the) tree, they go, down.

They chase after him, the dangerous one.

A sorcerer.

He runs along.

He sees, he’s drinking.

He spears (someone) there.

Poor thing!

Maybe before like this his father or mother or uncle committed a wrong.

They take him.
bolkgamo  
Hard law.

naworrk nabay  
That’s an “enforcer”.

naworrk nagalk  
Enforcer, sorcerer.

nagalk narnbay gagalklakminmin gagan.gan  
The sorcerer runs along, goes.

gula nen Oenpelli gagan.gan  
Maybe he goes this way to Oenpelli.

gula nen Gajarran nabay  
Maybe this way to Katherine.

gerrung warrunan wakay  
They don’t see him, no.
Phyllis talks about the proper way that women should relate to their brothers – and this was how she actually related to her brother, who was Chairman of the Bamyili Town Council when I was first there.

They should not be close together; they should not sit on the same swag; they should sit separately and not talk to each other. She mentions asymmetry in the ways they would give each other things: her brother could sometimes hand her tobacco or sugar; but she would not give things to him directly, they had to be given to him via another person. Her brother would not take things from her camp. Sometimes they could throw things down on the ground for each other for immediate use, like tobacco. Or he would send word to her camp, “Send me tobacco, rubbish!” – because the word brothers use for their sisters in Jawoyn is ngalbrerku, literally “bad”, people translate in Kriol as “rubbish”. Women, on the other hand, refer to their brothers as nalanggi “male one” – they do not call them “brother”.

Or vice versa, she could send word to her sister-in-law to send her tobacco from her brother’s camp, and her sister-in-law would see to it. Or they could send children from camp to camp as go-betweens.

She also mentions that you had to deal respectfully with your mother-in-law, you couldn’t just treat her in an ordinary way.

Her brother, she notes, was very cheeky! In other words, he would not countenance anything but this kind of proper relationship.

Again, typical of her, Phyllis draws a stark contrast between all that, and the way things are today: now, brothers and sisters sit together, they smoke together, women sit with legs apart and do not display proper modesty, people have gone the white man’s way since they’ve become citizens.

_Wakay nabay langgingaku gerrung waganay wabudiyay melengayuluk wakay_  
No, I didn’t go to my brother, nor sit on his swag, no.

_barlatbarlarr nyirrimbudiyyay_  
We sat in different places.

_gun'ba ngannganiwonay ngarrmakan gulawa nganganiwonay_  
He talked to me from there, and I talked to him from this way.

_nabay gurnjiwurnjin mam’buraiyn nabay gawumbudiyi jamorlk_  
Today they’ve turned into whitefellas, they sit any old way.

_jamoyamorlk_  
Any old way.

_gawuloyindin gawungan.gar_  
They follow each other about, they talk.

_warngukiyaK waljuyung nabay jarrmunggin_  
It’s true what I’m telling you cousin.
Avoidance customs - Phyllis Wiynjorrot

ngarrk langgingaku nabay barlatbarlarr nyirrimbudiya

But me, my brother and I sat separately.

gerrung gaya wakay

Not close together, no.

ngayu darrra gerrung wanganlakwonay wanganjungay wakay

And as for him, he didn’t come to me or talk to me, no.

Ngarrkmakan warnbarlarr ngabudiyay ngayimakan warnbarlarr budiya

As for me, I sat in one place and he sat in another.

niberrak wakay nabay nanonyirrang

Not in the hand, no, our husband/brother-in-law.

najartngayu ngallLynette

Lynette’s father (i.e. Phyllis’ husband).

narnbay wonay nanongaku

My husband would give to him.

berrak nganwonay begawaywo sugarwaywo

He would give me in my hand tobacco, sugar.

ngarrk nabay gerrung wawonay niberrakngaku wakay

But me, I didn’t give (things) to him in his hand, no.

gerrung wanganlermmangay

And he didn’t get (things) from my camp.

barlatbarlarr nyirrimbudiya too

We sat separately too.

gerrung gayakaya walganay

He didn’t go close.

nabaranggu nabay nababangaku

My brother was cheeky!

yowoyn

Yes.

gurnjiwurnjin nabay gauwnjarrparnjiyi gawunggan gan gauwmbudiyi jamorlk ngalwonburrangluk

Today they sit with legs apart, they go and sit any old way next to their sisters.

ngalbababurrangluk gok bengjiamoyamorlk

With their sisters, any old way.

gauwnjapulmamang muyuku narnbay bega

They smoke tobacco together.

nabay gurnjiwurnjin bolkgetmiyinwayn waitbelawun ngayimakan

Today the place has gone towards the whitefella way.

nabay bega bulayiyay

They would throw tobacco.
nabay gula nen nanongayu
bumbuyinaywayn nabay bonbuyamangay
bunggulumworrombokanay

When brothers-in-law fought they would spear them, they’d go to the ring place.

bunamjiyay yanganbo

eye used to stand up before.

gerrung wurrayertwoyinay wakay

They didn’t tease each other, no.

nagar’gar buwatjiwatjiyin na

The old people have disappeared.

gurnjiwurnjin dijun nabrerku na

Today is no good.

gawulugan gan bengjamoyamorlk

They just go any old way.

ngarrk langgingaku nawun budiay ngarrk niwula ngarrkmakan ngaburroy

As for me, my brother sat there and I camped here.

yowoyn

Yes.

jamorlk ngani jarrkbuyinay gun’ba bega ngalbrerku nganjarrkbun ngabijarrkbunay

(They) just sent word to each other from there, “send me tobacco, rubbish,” and I sent it.

ngarrkmakan darra brerk, a nganbijarrkbun ngajungay ngalnongayuluk nganbijarrkbunay

And as for me too, “Hey! Send it for me,” I’d say to his wife, and he sent it to me.

ngalnonyirrang wukanay

Our sister-in-law would carry it.

nganberrak nganwonay bega

And give me tobacco in my hand.

maywaywo

And tucker.

nabaranggu niyay langgingaku ngarrk

Me, my brother was cheeky.

gerrung bengjamoyamorlk waganay

I didn’t go around any old way.

nyirriyongnayinay ngayimakan ganay gun

We’d look at each other and him, he’d go that way.

gerrung morok nabay waljongay wakay

He didn’t hit flies either, no (he kept the proper distance). 16

ngarrk darra gerrung morok wanganjongay wakay ngarrkmakan barlarr ngayimakan barlarr ganay

And me, he kept the proper distance. Me, I’d go one way and he’d go another.

16 Literally, morok jong translates as “hit flies”. In a kinship context not to ‘hit flies’ is used to mean “maintain proper distance, behave properly”.

170 Tricksters and Traditions
begawu walknyirrangbay nyirrimbonjungay
We’d tell my children for tobacco.

begawu nyirriynjawayinaywayn
When we asked each other for tobacco.

nganjawanay gun’ba bega
He would ask me for tobacco from there.

walknyirrangba wo ngawonjungay bega
I’d say to my children, “give, tobacco.”

bumbiwukanaywu wo
So they’d bring it for him, and give it.

may buwonay sugar tea leaf lawawaywo bumbiwukanay
They gave tucker, sugar, tea leaf, flour and all, they’d bring to him.

gerrung wawukawanay nawunbay baba
I didn’t take it, there, brother.

nyimuyukbudi gerrung wanyirriynjungay nabay baranggu niyay thatun I tell you my brother
“Let’s sit together,” we didn’t say that, he was cheeky, that one, I tell you, my brother.

nganbuynngayu mangay
He had gotten a bundle of spears.

dokbunay ngayiwa ngayimakan
Him, he’d cut it himself.

nabay darrag ngalgarnjourngi ngu gerrung Waynwonay
And you didn’t give (things) to your mother-in-law either. [said by FM]

wakay
No.

ngalgarnjourngaku wakay
Not to my mother-in-law.

gerrung wamorokdokbunay wakay
I didn’t go up close to her, no.

barlatbarlarr nyirrimbudiyay gula ngayimakan ngarrkmakan
We sat separately, like this, her, me.

ngalgarnjourryek ngayu ngayimakan warnbudiyay gula ngayimakan darrag ngarrk ngayimakan darrag gula warnbudiyay
As for her, my mother-in-law she sat like this, and me, and her, she sat like this too.

narnbay yanganbo nyirriynjungay
That’s the way we did before.

nabay nagar’gar
Old people.

gurnjiwurnjin jamorlk gawulwelangbudiyi gawulerrmiyindin begawaywo gawumbudiyi namalnguyunjanggi
Today they just sit any way, they take tobacco and all from each other, lots of them.
gawumerenden  They come together. ¹⁷
narnbay gawumerenden gawumbudiyi  They come together, they sit.
gurnjin nabay gurnjinwayn jitijin juy  Today, today when citizenship’s happened.
yanganbo bolkwirlang  Before the country was hard (i.e. custom was hard).
warnbolkwirlang mungguywun  Blackfella custom was hard.
nagamogamo bolkwirlang  Hard, hard custom (country).

¹⁷ The word used here, mere, has to do with coming together, into close proximity, as in getting together to sit around and talk.
Phyllis talks about a place called Worreluk on the King River (between Katherine and Barunga), and related topics having to do with how women get children. I ask an occasional question.

*Worre,* or ngalworreworre, means marriyn “young girl,” Phyllis explains. There is a place on the King River where stone formations represent young girls’ breasts, and therefore also suggest fecundity. Phyllis, Sarah Flora and I visited this place a number of times, since they considered it one of the most significant places on the King River.

This makes Phyllis think about how women get children: child spirits come to them, directed to them by the fathers, or by their father’s sisters. Women themselves do not direct these child spirits, Phyllis observes; the fathers or other close paternal relatives do. She tells how her daughter Lynette appeared to her father, Phyllis’ husband Billy Dupdup, as a cow. He stood and tried to shoot the animal, but it did not drop. After a while it occurred to him: This is not a cow, it is a child. And then he knew, and later Phyllis knew, that this child had entered her there, near Durrkgamernggarlan (on the upper King River, where an army compound for Aboriginal people was built during the second World War).

Another daughter, Nell, appeared as a child spirit to her husband, and then to her, at Mataranka.

All these kinds of power that come out of the country, she refers to by the term nagamorng (mentioning that this term is also used for powerful, dangerous sites to the north in Gimbat Station).

She then describes how old people used to collect blood, and put this on their spears. They also used to spray water from their mouths over the landscape (*bumbolkgikgikmay* “they sprayed the country”). This caused game to come up close, and it caused animals to teem and be plentiful. Old people used to do that, she says; today, people have become (like) whitefellas.

*narnbay ngalworreworre* That worreworre (young girls),

*niyarnbay bolmakwoy* Made the place there.

*niyarnbay dun* That hole (cave) there.

*gadunjiyi niyarnbay gilkan marrkluk* There’s a cave there in (under) the grass.

*gilkan* Inside/underneath,

*narnbay ngalworreworre wotjmayn* The worreworre (young girl dreaming) went down there.

*niyarnbaywa*

*wotjmayn nawun garri he been come out* Went down and came out here to the west.
Come out, went back, and stays there forever, the young girl.

The young women, that’s it, that’s a young girl.

She went, and was looking for a place.

“Where’ll I go?”

“Maybe I’ll see a place this way.”

“I’ll stay for good,” she said, she saw a place.

To the west here.

At the young girl’s place.

Worreworre is marriynmarriyn.

“Marriyn” we say, that’s worreworre.

Marriyn is a (girl) that’s just growing.

That’s worreworre.

Those breasts of theirs. (answering FM’s question about the meaning of rocks in the river).

Our breasts, I mean, they were put before over this way.

The ancestors put (them).

The children became what’s it, with breasts, they grew breasts, they call them marriyn.

Some young men,

Some big children,

They keep coming out from there.

Not from just anywhere.
When they bogey (bathe). Their spirits follow them (or, they follow them as spirits).

“Mother,” they say. “Father, where is my mother lying?” “Here.”

It climbs onto her now. “This is your mother lying here,” they tell it.

Or maybe they catch up to their auntie. “Auntie, where is my mother?” they say to them.

“Go over there yonder (west).” They say.

It goes now. It goes and asks.

“Auntie,” if its auntie is there, well. Might be its sister.

“Where is my mother sleeping?” It says to them.

Dream. I’m talking about dream.

“I dreamt,” then, “maybe the child is entering you,” they say.
And the child climbs on now.

It acted like a cow, some imitated cattle, Lynette imitated a cow. (in response to a recollection from FM.)

I went there to Durrkgamernggarlan.

Her father went and shot and shot, it didn’t fall down.

All right.

“Maybe this isn’t cattle, maybe this is child,” thought her father.

We saw when her father shot the cow, it didn’t fall down, that’s why she’s sickly.

A long time after it fell down, Lynette was acting as if she were a cow.

Here to the west at Durrkgamernggarlan.

That King Valley, I mean Barnatjal.

Upriver, right there.

After I realised.

“Yes, maybe that was a child you were shooting at,” I said.

“A child,” I said.

To myself, in my mind.

That’s her place, Lynette.

That’s true.

“Yes, that’s true,” I said.

“That’s a child,” I said.
gula warronbel'mayn but ngarrk
nganbel'mayn niyarnbay

It entered them like this, but as for me, it entered me there.

Durrkgamernnggarlan

(At) Durrkgamernnggarlan.

ngalbay ngalNell ngayimakan gula
Mataranka

And Nell’s for her, was this way at Mataranka.

niyarnbay nganbel'mangay

It climbed onto me there.

wakay jamorlk yowoyn

No, just nothing.

ginba ngiynbonnanay

Some of them you saw?

[said by FM]

nabay najartngayuluk buligi burayiyn

She was pretending to her father to be a cow.

him gotta come out najartngayuluk

It (spirit) has got to come out to its father,

ngalgarrangluk wakay

Not to its mother.

garrangwayn gawonbuynjuyung wakay
gerrung warronbumbidirn'mang

Not where they call them mother, they don't come out to them.

najartburrangluk gawonbumbidirn'miyindin

They reveal themselves to their father.

gawumbuligiburayindin
gawunggalwanburayindin
gawulungarrkburayindin burrirt burayindin
tenuk burayindin narnbay

They pretend to be cattle, they pretend to be goannas, they pretend to be snakes, they act like flying foxes, they act like turkeys.

gawonbumbidirn'mamang

They appear to them.

gawonbumbengjiyiwu nijin.gurr

And they will hear them in their ears.

gurni ngalgarrang gawonbuynjung

“Where is my mother?” they say to them.

gun nen ngaljongwokngayu gaburrayuwayn
gawunggan.gan buwurr dirn'

“There where its auntie is sleeping,” they go there and come out (as dreaming).

nabay buligiwayn gawonbumalkjayang or
durrk or tenuk or gernalk

When they shoot cattle or emu or turkey or ibis,

gawunggan jongwok gurni wurra najart
gawonjung

They go, “auntie, where is my father?” it says to them.
nawun garri gawuynjung

They say this way (west).

buwurr

Dreaming.

gawelanggan gawonjarrkbun na

It goes, she sends them now.

gagan jart gurni wurra ngalgarrang?

It goes, “father, where is my mother?”

nawula

“Here.”

warnbayen bel’ gawonjung

And then it enters them.

narnbaywu na

That’s the way.

Worrelukba nen Worrelukba niyarnbay na

From Worreluk, maybe from Worreluk, there, that one (place).

najirriyn

nagamorng niyarnbay ngalworreworre

Internal (power) that worreworre, those young girls, children.

nawalkwalkan

The children come from underneath, I say.

narnbay nagamorng narnbay nawalkwalkan

I say “gamorng” for Bula too (a dreaming).

ngajuyung

nagamorng darra ngajuyung narnbay

I call it “gamorng” also.

Bulawu

nawalkwalkan buwarnbarlarr

Children are (something) different, as to them, they still play.

burrangmakan niyarnbay gawuwarnyertjiyi

ye’ ye’ ye’ ye’ ye’ gawunyajung

They laugh and they carry a song, what's it of theirs.

gawunggarramamang ngeya

negera burlur

burrangmakan nabaywu nawkwalkakan

As for them, the children are happy about their mothers.

gawuyilkmakjindin ngalgarrangburrangu

When they enter them.

ngayimakan barlarr nabay

There.

nagamorng

As for it, that “gamorng” is different.

narnbay nangeya

It’s what’s it,

nabay ngalworreworre ngayimakan nabay

That worreworre is something by itself.
niyarnbay gilkan bat
There is a stone inside.

niyarnbay King River
There at King River.

ngayimakan gamorng that's all thatun na
ngayimakan nabay berku
As for it, that gamorng, that is
dangerous.

narnbay nagamorng nyirriynjuyung
That’s what we call "gamorng".

loldreaming
Like dreaming?
[said by FM]

yowoyn gilkan gun gawotjiyindin
Yes, it’s hidden underneath.

gerrung wanyinan wakay narnbay
ngayimakan gamorng
nagamorng nyirriynjuyung
We can’t see it, no, that gamorng, we
call it.

waynjawanay
You should have asked.

yenang wurra nabay
“What is that?”

nabay ngayimakan lawk namolbarlayi
gawuynjuyungwayn
As for that stonetipped spear, where
they say powerful hunter.

buynjarryamiyinay gula gilkan nabay
layiwu durrkgu mungguywu
They used to pierce their legs, for game,
for emu, and for humans.

gawumolyamiyindinwayn gunlawk
yanganbo buyamiyinay gurnjin wakay na
Where they pierce themselves with a
stonetipped spear, before when they
speared themselves, today nothing.

bumam’burayiyn
They’ve turned into whitefellas.

nabay nayawurriyn
The young boys.

but yanganbo nayung’yunggi
buwatjiwatjiyiyiyn nabay buyamiyinay
But before, the old people (who) have
disappeared they used to spear
themselves.

angula nganyil buyamiyinay durrkgu
Here, they pierced their vein for emu.

yowoyn
Yes.

gayakaya ganay
It came very close.

narnbay buyamiyinay
They speared themselves (for) that.

gik buynjungay narnbay nganngeyangayu
ngandilkngayuwwu winja
They spat on the point of the spear.

bolgikgik buynjungay
They spat around the country.
Tricksters and Traditions

**bumbolkgikgikmangay narnbaywu**

They spat it (water) around the country for that.

**nabay welangmurndi’miyinay galwan nen nabay nen durrk nen nabay nen buligi nen welangganay gayakaya**

So they gathered up, maybe goannas and emus and cattle, they came close up.

**yanganbo nagar’gar buwelangwatjiwatjiyiyn**

(That was) before, the old people have gone.

**gurnjiwurnjin nabay bengjamorlk gawunggan.gan**

Today, they (young people) just go around (with nothing).

**gawuwhitefella ’burayindin**

They imitate whitefellas (are like whitefellas).

**bumbolkgikgikmangay yanganbo gula gun nagar’gar**

They used to spray the country before, like this, the old people.

**buyongnanay gula nagar’garwayn yanganbo buynjoyinay narnbaywu bonbumbibolkgikgikmay**

They watched like this, before when the old people died, they sprayed the country for them.

**bonbuynjungay bonbuynjawanay na narnbay gila welangbuluwulmiwukanay**

They told them, they asked them, and they made it (country) teem.

**welangdirn’mangay wangwaywo buligi waywo, lungarrkwaywo wamwaywo batjiwaywo gowarrangwaywo**

They came out, the animals, cattle, the snakes, the sugarbag, ground sugarbag, the echidna.

**buwelangdirn’mangay buwelangganay gok**

They came out, they went.

**bonbuwelanglakwonay buwelangbunay narnbay gila**

They caught up to them, they hit/killed them, like that now.
Curlew - Phyllis Wiynjorrotj

[Audio: 33 PW Curlew]

Birds talk, and they convey important messages. Here Phyllis talks about how people would pay attention to the curlew when it would sing out; usually it was because it noticed somebody moving about. And the tawny frogmouth too – who says “gibirtgulutj” – its call made people pay attention too. Then the men would get up and get their spears. The men would move, not the entire mob; and then women would notice that their husbands were gone (and would understand). Also the white cockatoo and black cockatoo. Phyllis is pointing out that birds calling are saying things of importance, and that made people move.

yowoyn narnbay guluwurr gay'mangay nangekan

Yes, the curlew called out at night.

nabay bonyi'miwukanay nagar'gar bumbengday'mangay

He made the old people get up, and they realized.

buyongnanay na ngan.garlayak

They watched the dark.

gula gaganba gangorkngorkanba buynjungay nabay nagar'gar

“He must be going this way, he must be carrying food,” they said, the old people.

ginba ngalgar'gar buyi'menay

Sometimes the old ladies got up.

nabaywayn guluwurr ngan.gay

When the curlew talked.

yi’ yi’ jungay buyi'menay

“Up, up,” it said. They got up.

yenang wurra darra bay guluwurr jawarl

What else, curlew, (and) tawny frogmouth.

jawarl narnbay gibirtgulutj gibirtgulutj gibirtgulutj jungaybay ngan.gangan.gay

Tawny frogmouth goes “gibirtgulutj”, it would say, it would talk.

jirrka'jirrkanay laynba narnbay bonnanay ginba

It would shift from one tree and saw them sometimes.

gun'ba bungganaywayn nabalay gawakba

When they went from there, far away.

warnbayen yi' bengday' buynjungay nagar'gar

Then up, realize, the old people did.

gula nen gawunggan.gan buynjungay namen burrangmakan nagar'gar

Maybe they’re going this way, they thought to themselves, the old men.
They didn’t make a big mob get up, no.

They got their spears and disappeared.

The wife would get up and look for her husband.

He’d disappeared, he’d run after the sorcerer. That way.

He had it in his head before.

When the bird would talk.

The curlew.

And what-all, the white cockatoos.

When it talked at night.

What-all, black cockatoo, at nighttime it talked.

He’d get up and go.

Yes.
Phyllis talks about two kinds of contexts in relation to each other. Men used to pierce their basilical veins, tapping the blood in order to be able to hunt well. They would spray the blood, mixed with water, from their mouths. Having done that, Phyllis says, men like her father would find kangaroos, emus, and plenty of game. To spray the countryside in this way made the game come up close and easier to spear. Men would go about together, and when they “followed each other”, everything was OK, there was no problem.

But sometimes people would look at someone, and get a shock. A man whom another detected in this way would be said to have a “devil” or a “ghost” (waral) on him, that is, to be guilty of taking a life. People who had done such things were secretive, Phyllis says; they would hide themselves.

A key word in the following text, gunwelang, is usually used of one who is a good hunter, the one who has effectively made a kill. Phyllis and others generally used to translate gunwelang as the “right man.” But notice, as in the text below, that she also uses it to talk about the “right man” in the sense of the one who has perpetrated an aggression or a killing of another, meaning something more like ‘aggressor’.

Typically, Phyllis’ comments about these practices are ambivalent. She was clearly proud of people like her father who were good hunters and who knew how to make the game come up close. But she often described the old times as brerku “bad”, or “dangerous”, and had in mind such things as people who committed acts of aggression towards others. Her comments about what has changed are also negatively tinged, however: people have let all this go, they have become like whitefellas and do not observe the old ways.

- boko buyamiyinay: They speared each other with boko (bamboo spears).
- buworrombokayinaywaayn mowe yip: When they went after each other (til) sundown.
- gerru nganjarr, jarrmalkja’ buynjungay: After they pierced their legs.
- gunboko or lama: With wooden or stone spear.
- nagunwelang: The “right ones”
- boyn: That’s all.
- nabay gerrung ngarrk waganwelang gawuynjuyung nabay yawurriyn, thatun leku: “Me, I’m not the one who did it,” they say, the young fellas, that’s all right.
- nabay naginba: Some of them.
- nabay nagunwelang nabay gawotjiyindin: The perpetrator hides himself.
mam gagarriyi nigorlongayuluk He has a “devil” on his back.
nawaral A “ghost”.
narnbay nagunwelang gawuynjuyung That’s the one they call “gunwelang”.
gerrung ngarrk, gerrung wagunwelang ngajung “I’m not the one who did it,” I say.
ngiyn darra gerrung wagunwelang wajung ngiynjung You too, “I’m not the one who did it,” you say.
gerrung wayngunwelang ngiyn na “You’re not the one who did it, you.”
ngarrk darra gerrung wagunwelang Me too, “I’m not the one who did it.”
like me ngalmuka Like I’m a woman.
gerrung walgunwelang “He’s not the one who did it.”
yanganbo nagar’gar bonbunanay The old people used to see before.
nganworlk ngannguluk bulayiyay They threw the fat, the lungs.
ngannguluk bulayiyay narnbay They threw the lungs to that man who was sitting yonder, the old man was sitting.
mungguyluk nanumbuynwayn budi�ay Here the old man was sitting.
niwlula nagarwu budi�ay

buyongnanay yo ngudubarr buynjungay yo They got a shock, “yes, this is the one who did it,” they used to say, the old people.
narngula nagunwelang buynjungay
yanganbo nagar’gar

yongnanay narnbay mungguy gulawayn They were watching that man who was standing like this.
japfiyay

budi�ay niwlula nagarwu budi�ay He was sitting here, the old man was sitting.

yo nawula nagunwelang jungay yanganbo “Yes, this is the one who did it,” he’d say.
nagar’gar buynjungay The old people would say.

naway mungguy Another man.

buyongnayinay gok They watched each other.
nagar’gar yanganbo The old people before.
nabaywayn gerrung English That’s when they didn’t speak English, nothing.
warrungan gay wakay
yukyongnanay yo narngula nagunwelang
He watched him, “yes, this was the one who did it.”

welangiungay na
He’d say.

nan.gar’gar bonjingay
He told the old men.

bonjingay arngula nagunwelang
He told them, “this is the one who did it.”

yawurriyn bonjingay bonbengbanay
He told the young men, he informed them.

nyawonwelangworrombokan buynjingay
“We’ll chase them,” they said, they speared each other in the flat.

nabay nibarlatj buwelangyamiyinay
He told the old men.

yanganboy
Before.

gurnjin guwarrrk nabay
But today, the whites have changed the place.

welangbolkwar’woy man

mamgun nawula
It’s whitefella way now.

yanganbo yowoyn
Before yes. [responding to question of FM]

nagunwelang nabay ngayimakan
The culprit, the one who did it was the one he watched, that one’s the one who did it.

nagunwelangwayn yongnanay nabay

ngudubarr’mangay gulawu nabay naleku
He got a shock like this, that’s good.

yo narnbay nawaral gagarriyi mam
“Yes, he’s got a ghost, a spirit,” he’d say.

jungay ngayimakan

ngudubarr’mangay, he been yern’manggu
He got a shock, he was frightened.

nabay yuknanaywayn jamorlk
When he saw them, when they were just walking around and talking.

buloyinaywayn bungan.gaywayn

nabay leku
That’s OK, no problem.

nabay leku
That’s good.

nayawurriynwirri or nagaruwuwirri
Only just the young men or really old men, when they were walking around together.

buloyinaywayn

nabay naleku
That’s good.

nayilkmak buloyinay
They followed each other feeling good.
Before,

It was bad.

(When) a sorcerer or cheeky man, a murderer was watching them.

He’d pierce his vein and blood would fall, he used to pierce his vein.

Blood fell, finished.

The old people, my father was like that, he used to spear his vein.

After he’d spray his blood (with his mouth).

He’d go and see an emu on clear ground.

He’d go and see a kangaroo.

On clear ground.

He’d go and see a young kangaroo on the plain.

My father, he’d go and see an emu on the plain.

Yes.
A proud Grandma - Phyllis Wiynjorrotj

Phyllis boasts proudly about her grandchildren, from her daughter and son.

Those two ngamayang (skin), they go get sugarbag and bring it back. The children go fishing, like when they threw in their lines at Wire Yard, and they catch fish and bring it back for me. They don’t give it to their mother, no, they bring it back to me. They put the fish on a stick and carry it back. They go hunting for goanna and put it so it hangs down from their belts. They don’t give it to their parents, no, they’re too young (to know to do that). But they bring it back to my camp. I feel embarrassed! Their father sits and watches my mouth (because he doesn’t get the game, I do).

gawuwelangwar'mamang
gawuwelanggoimamang

They load them up and put them.

gerru gawuwelangjotljerrkoyindin
ngakurlung lerrngakuluk niyarnbay

Those two ngamayang (are good hunters).

there na nangamayangyarrk
good hunter
dubala

Another one is growing up now, from the dead person, our daughter.

namayimakwaywo

All good foragers.

jatgorrang ngalwon all right

Two girls, all right.

ngalwon darra gagan.gan ngayiwa

The girl goes herself.

nabay ngayimakan gajabakmamang

She goes fishing herself.

galayiyi nabaywu nabernda'berndak
giyowk nawula Gajarran nawun Gajarran
ngangarlarrngayu

She throws (the line) for big fish in the Katherine River.

nawula gok niwurni wurra nabaybay
WireYard niyarnbay bumburroy

Where is this place? They camped there at Wire Yard.

nabay gawulayiwayn giyowk gunfishing
line

Where they fish, with a line.

gerru gunlayn gawuwelanggorrkangan

After they carry it with (on) a stick.

gawuwelangjotljerrkoyindin

They bring it back to camp.

bulerrkoyinay

They brought it back.
Some of them too, those young boys.

All the bardyn' (skin).

When all the ngamayang are hunting.

They go by themselves, they go, follow the river, and after they kill goanna and bring it back to camp.

After they put the (fish) on a stick.

They put it, finish, and bring it home for me.

And they don’t give (any) to their mothers.

They are too young.

They don’t give game, that Lester doesn't give it.

I eat it myself.

I’m ashamed before them (the mothers) too!

(They are) young.

They don’t give to their mothers or fathers!

I eat it myself.

After they go.

They see a goanna running, they chase it and hit it.

(They) bring the carcase back.

They bring it back, I see they make the carcase hang down (as they carry it).
woy nyanumbilerrkoyin niwula
“Hey! You are bringing it back for me.”

nganbumbilerrkoyindin ngakurlung lerrngakulk
They bring it back to my camp for me.

najartburrang nganbungalkyongnanan
Their fathers are watching my mouth.

ngalgarrangburrang nabay ngajarra ngarrgiwa
And their mothers, I eat it by myself.
Sarah tells a story that relates to a place near Manyalaluk (Eva Valley). This place, Jati Gandawuyinay, is about 35 kilometres from Barunga. *Jati* means “frog”, and the place name means “frogs fought each other”.

There was a pregnant Frog at this place, very large, Nabilil had brought it. (Nabilil is the name of a creator associated with the length of the Katherine River). All the little green frogs (*jatngeretjngeretj*) came from low down. Red kingfisher and Blue kingfisher and Crow snuck up and speared the frog with a stone spear, and all kinds of frogs emerged and began to spread out. There was the real frog, the long-legged one (*jati*), and the green spring frogs, and the little black ones, and the frog with the white pouch (*wortngong*’*mi*), and the one with a red stripe on its back.

Sarah then tells of a few other travelling animals that relate to this area and further east: The frog was hurting and kept going east, a kangaroo was also going east wanting to reach the water at Murrumbitj (Mainoru), it crossed the track of a black wallaroo, it went into the water, and its heart is there.

“Gudunu my grandfather told me these things when we went around”, she says. A lot of people at Barunga and Eva Valley knew of the frogs story, and many parts of the area were said to relate to it. The water here was said to be along the track of frogs who travelled in the region, from a place called Jarukmele to Jawarlluk (Yeuralba). They were frightened away by the Tawny Frogmouth (*jawarl*) who is at Yeuralba and they came to Manyalaluk (Eva Valley). There is a rock scatter east of the Eva Valley airstrip, and Sarah used to say the rocks were holes dug by frogs who came here from Jarukmele, Jawarlluk, to Jati Gandawuyinay. Rocks scattered about are frogs’ bodies, and red ochre in the nearby creek is said to be frogs’ blood.

Sarah knew this area around Eva Valley, the King River, and east to Mainoru very well. The country of her own clan (Girrimbitjba) was on the Mainoru River. One of the main places there is called Wetji Namurrugaymi, but there are many others there that relate to her (and Fanny Birlamjam’s) main dreaming, Emu (see Figure 3).

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**Jati Frog Dreaming at Manyalaluk - Sarah Flora**

[Audio: 36 SF Jati Frog Dreaming]
ngaldrekan ngaldrekan burroy

She was pregnant.

nabay napatgeretjngeretj nawkwalkkan
gun’ba bunbumanulay jengba

All the little spring frogs followed them low down.

narnbay nijadengba

There where the creek comes in (at the tributary).

gun’bawan mulaam buwarnmulam
narnbay namarih, buyuknay

They followed that old man, they saw him.

narnbay Jey’mi welanggar’milakwonay
ngalarnbay ngal-drekan

That Kingfisher snuck up on the pregnant one.

jey’mi narnbay nyibengjiyiwayn boooy
boooywayn gajuyung

Kingfisher is the one we hear that goes “boooy, boooy”.

narnbay gar’milakwonay Wakwak

That’s the one that snuck up, and Crow.

Wakwak Jawayakwayak narnbay
bunggar’milakwonay

Crow, Grey Shrike, Thrush, they snuck up.

warngar’milakwooooy buyamayn lawk
motjmi

Snuck up and speared her with a stone-tipped spear.

gerru guwarrk narnbay jati
yukborrorr’milayn

After that Frog tumbled down.

niyarnbay ngey’may gurnjin waljoyiyn

It was in pain and nearly died (might have died).

narnbayyarrk Jey’miyarrk Boy’mi Wakwak

These two, Blue Kingfisher and Red Kingfisher, and Crow.

dream-time

Dream-time.

niyarnbay jati welangyukuluwuulayn
bumbarlarr’mayn burrangmakan

There frogs just multiplied and became different.

nigaratjawayn galurl’ilurlmamang narnbay
jati sand frog

Now that sand frog buries itself in the sand.

jatgeretjgeretj bumbarlarr’mayn

And the little spring frogs became different.

jatiwirr nabay najarrguyangguyang

The real frog, that’s the long-legged ones.

narnbay bumbarlarr’mayn

Those differentiated themselves.

najarrguyangguyang narnbay Jawoynba

The long-legged ones, that’s for Jawoyn.
Tricksters and Traditions

Arnbay ngayu jatngeretjengeretj nabay nawalkwalkan

Nayukgurukguruk

Narnbay ngayimakan nayukgurukguruk

Nabay ngayu narnbay jati narnbay

Najarrguyangguyang

Narnbay buyamayn niyarnbay nijirrngul

Narnbay bamdummayn jurrungba

Wak gawelangbornangeyarra,

Winja gotma'gotmayn darra ngaeya gok

Niyarnbay bunderekyamayn

Bunggar'milakwonay

Narnbay Jey'mi Boy'mi Wakwak

Niyarnbay buyamayn lawk motjmi jitjwarr

Narnbay najati yukbuluwulmayn

Niyarnbay garatjaluk darra

Wortngong'miluku

Anarnbaywu

Narnbay darra nawirrwirrmi nginyynanan

Arnbay Jati Gandawuyinay narnbay

Narnbay buyinaywayn niyarnbay

But they are still one name, jati.

The black ones.

Those black ones, the little ones.

The long-legged ones.

They speared her (Frog) there at the spring.

And a hole was made higher up.

And the water what’s it, the water sprang out.

And spears were put there, what’s it spears.

They speared her belly.

They snuck up on her.

That Blue Kingfisher and Red Kingfisher, and Crow.

They speared her with stone-tipped spears, poor thing.

And frogs multiplied from there.

There in the sand where it lives.

The big white-pouch frog too.

That one.

And that one you see with red on its back, in the middle of its back.

That Jati Gandawuyinay, where they fought (where a fight occurred).
malnguyn ngeyayn balpmayn

Most of them what’s it, spread out.

warnngey’maaaay gonangguy balganay

It was still sick and kept going east.

narnbay jati naberndak guwarrk ngeya
gupu

That Frog, but that big plains kangaroo.

ngayiman gonang balganay

It was going east.

gonang warngangaaay

Kept going east.

yemboyi walbornalakwoy Murrumbitj
guwarrk nay godiyn

It wanted to reach the water at
Murrumbitj, saw a black wallaroo.

nawula ganamjiyi juy, jengba gangay

It’s standing here, it said, and went
lowdown.

jengba warngangaaay nawula jeng

Kept going lowdown, downriver.

gabatnekjiiyiwayn niyarnbay ngayimakan
welangwojimayn narnbay bolung

Where the rock soaks, the rainbow went
down there.

welangwojimayn niyarnbay bolung
ngayimakan

The rainbow went down there.

niyarnbay gabatnekjiiyiwayn

Where the rock is submerged.

yowoyn wakluk

Yes, in the water.

guwarrk nganngeyangayu yembo
ngandomgayu

but that its what’s it, its heart.

nganbuwarnjuy najala nganwarnjuy

They always told me, my grandpa told me.

naGudunu joyiynwayn

Na-Gudunu, who’s died.

nabay ngayimakan

That one.

nganwarnjungay
nganbengwerlpu’werlpunay
nganwuka’wukanaywayn
nyirringganaywayn

He told me, he drummed it into me, took
me around when he took me around, as we
went around.

warnbayen gonang-ba

From the east then.

warnmaynbatwol’mayn Garndalpurru

Kangaroo kept on climbing the high cliff.

ngalJawoynmorro ngalJawoynmorro
ngalJawoynmorro

The Jawoyn one (kangaroo song)
She looked back

Many Jawoyn.

“This is my Jawoyn country,” she said.