

31

WHERE THE DEAD BIBBULMUN GO

Koorannup-Nyeerganup is the place where the dead Bibbulmun nyoongar go. It is a country like their own, and has game and fish and food just as they had in their living country, and it is situated west of their waddarn (sea) under which their kaanya (spirit of the newly dead) must travel to reach it.

Now the bulgur of Manjoorup and Binjarup, whose kaanya left their bodies to go under the waddarn were stopped in the middle of the sea by a janga karrak, stationed there in a hidden nest, who caught the kaanya and would not let it continue its journey to Koorannup. Karrak would turn the kaanya into a janga (spirit) which would come back and haunt the spot where it died. The karrak is a black cockatoo with red tail.

Many however succeeded in passing the karrak's nest by diving underneath it, and when they got to the other side of the nest, they travelled on and on and on until they came to the shallow waters on the Koorannup side of the sea. As they travel through the sea they sometimes catch a fish which they take with them, or perhaps when they have come out of the shallow water on the shore they may see a tamu and catch it. All their moorurt who have gone before them know that they are coming, and watch for them on the beach. As soon as they see him on Koorannup shore, they all come over to him, and taking the food from his hand, they cook it and give it to him to eat. As soon as he has eaten the food he falls asleep, and while he sleeps his Koorannup moorurt take off all his skin and his nails and when he wakes up he is just like the other kaanya.

Before Woolberr, the last of the Gingin district tribe, died, he spoke of Koorannup as a land of plenty, where game such as he found on his own ground was plentiful, and where the nyoongar were like the "white man's sheep", so many were they. Woolberr's wife and six children were long dead, but in his dreams he saw them in Koorannup, saw his woman with her wanna (digging stick) goota (skin bag) and bwokka (skin cloak), just as she was

when he had her, but always she looks at him with her left eye only; all the rest of her she hides with her bwokka. The kool-ungur (children) are just as they were in his maia, but they wear no bwokka.