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Westerly acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Australians. We celebrate the continuous living cultures of Indigenous people and their vital contributions within Australian society.

Westerly's office, at the University of Western Australia, is located on Whadjak Noongar land. We recognise the Noongar people as the spiritual and cultural custodians of this land.

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63.2

New Writing from Western Australia
Fiction
Creative Non-Fiction
Poetry
Essays

Westerly

A Bush Walk

Yvonne Kickett

Yvonne Kickett is a Ballardong Noongar woman, a respected Elder and a Botanical Specialist. She is an experienced poet with a significant body of work, an artist, and she contributed to the Bilya Koort Boodja Centre for Nyoonngar Culture and Environmental Knowledge in Northam.

A small crowd has gathered,
waving like anxious ants arriving at a picnic.
The sun is a giant glowing ember in the sky
warming us all as we get ready.
We start off, feet shuffling, traipsing in unison
that matches the beating of our hearts.
My sisters walk alongside me,
our hearts weighed down by a recent loss.
The gum trees sway, blown by an easterly breeze,
leaves swishing to a silent tune that makes them dance to and fro.
In the distance you can hear birds singing, different tunes,
a healing melody for our hearts;
they're the orchestra of the bush.
Dry grass, crawling ants, sheoak trees,
and dead logs line the terrain that leads to the creek bed,
dried up, but still beautiful to take in.
Then in silence, we absorb all that surrounds us,
meditating, fixating on the sounds, smells and feelings.
In the distance the rumblings of a V8 engine speeding past,
the soft sound of the dogs running in and out of the bushes,
the buzzing of flies near our ears; the peace broken,
brought back to reality in an instant.

As we make our way back to the cars
our bodies restored for now.
We hug each other, today has been good.
This, a day of healing,
one to take away the hurt.
Sisters walking as one, enjoying
the company of our Wadjela Moort.
Packing up, ready to go our separate ways,
Our hearts soar as if lifted by giant eagles wings,
sacred bushland etched in our minds forever.
A walk to remember, our bush walk.