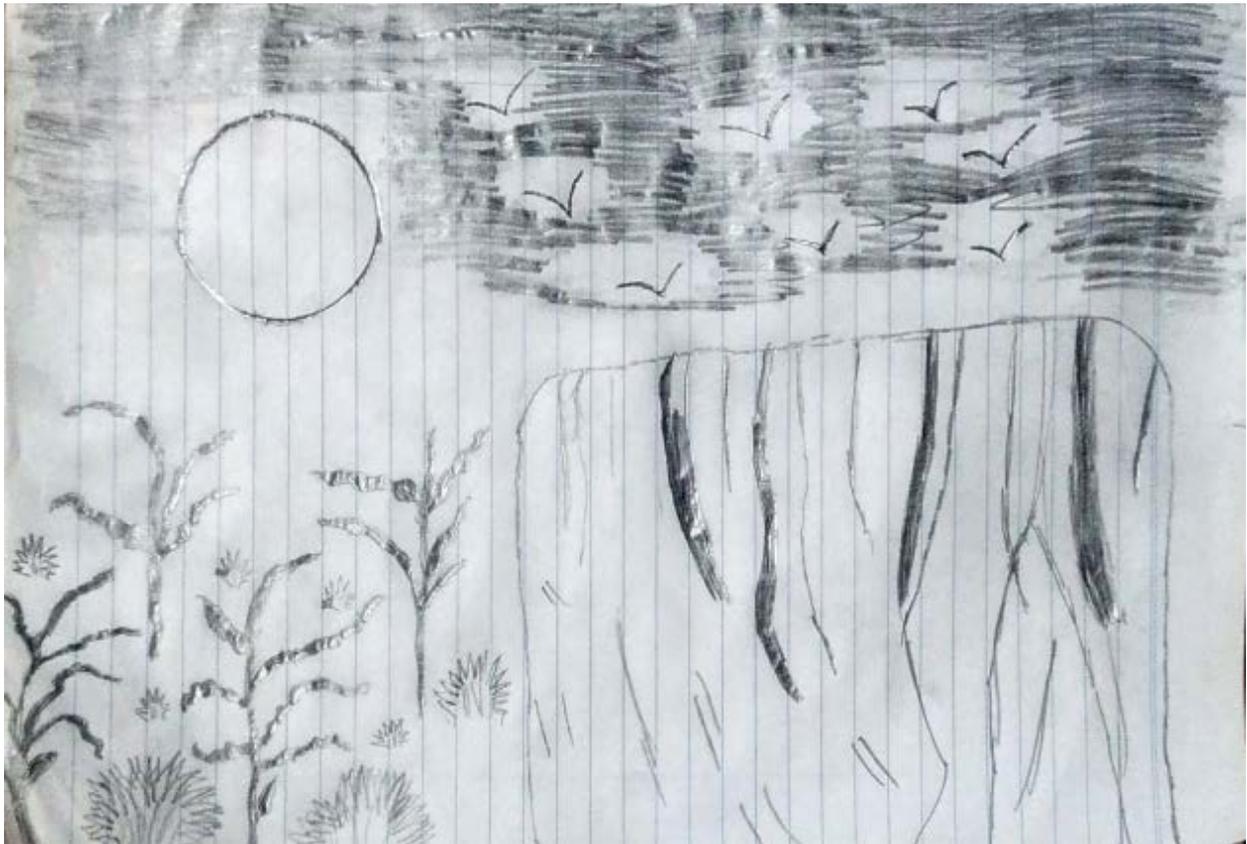


Echoes of the past



Whilst walking through the bush with eucalyptus trees, I saw cute fluffy koalas hiding and peeping between the leaves. A big wanari tree is sitting like a giant a few meters ahead. As the mud squishes between my toes, I look up and see birds circling the area. I hear hurried footsteps, behind me, my best mates Monaro and Yarran are huffing and puffing.

“Wait up Waru “They both cried.

I slow down and wait for them to catch up. We are all the same age and love our culture, and always try to find a way so we can find out more about it. My tummy starts grumbling for a quick snack. So I reach down to the edge of the path. My favorite was Tjuratja (honey ants). I pushed my hands through them mud, a sudden voice made me jumped.

“Waru what are you doing” Monaro questioned

The two had both caught up with me,

“Monaro I am searching for honey ants, I want to taste some honey”

“Good idea, Let me and Yarran join”

“Okay”

So we sat there at the edge of the path searching for honey ants. Before long all three of us had caught several ants. As, I pressed and squeezed the tummy and let some honey drizzle out onto my tongue. Monaro and Yarran did the same. As we carried on walking Yarran had spotted arnguli (bush plums). We stopped and brought some bush plums to the center of our palms. The bright red and dark black color reflected to the afternoon sun. The sweet and sour taste was simply delicious. We carried walking shortly we reached the wanari (mugla) tree. We reached our hands out and felt the trees ruff and cool trunk.

“Remember when we came and chopped some branches of from the top for firewood” Monaro said.

“Don’t forget the time we came and made boomerangs” Yarran chimed in

“And we made spears” I added.

As the golden sun started to set we made our way over to our humpies. A delicious smell came to my nose making me want to eat over the fire. Our grandma was cooking damper and smoked kangaroo meat for dinner. Later after the delectable dinner Monaro, Yarran and me circled around the fire and heard dreamtime stories from our grandmas. This aroused us to explore our heritage, from our early ancestors around the area and see it with our own eyes.

I woke to the sound of cockatoos circling the area in the color of orange and a faint color of yellow, making my shadow dark as I went to wake up Monaro and Yarran.

“Monaro, Yarran lets go explore Uluru in the morning it’s beautiful”

We started heading over to Uluru (Ayers rock). Dingo’s howling, kookaburras laughing all echoed around in the morning. Echidnas playing hide and seek hiding behind the bushes.

By the time we had arrived the sun was peeping its head over Uluru. At first it was dark then slowly the red and brown color came to life. The landscape around Uluru covered with orange dust and spiky bushes. Me Monaro and Yarran bumping each other giggling to fits of laughter gently avoiding the spiky edges of the bushes.

“Look at Uluru” I whisper to Monaro and Yarran

The holes where made of spears from the poisonous snake Liru. And the cracks were from Kuniya the woman python, striking at her enemies.

All three of us were amazed by this sight, sitting down at the edge of the path as we watched the sun rise over Uluru.

Slowly the sun reached the sky way above up high. With that short glimpse we walk towards the Kuniya Walk and started to travel along the path. In the distance we saw Kangaroos bounding and jumping. Wombats were steadily walking and sniffing at the edges of plants to find food. The area seemed so familiar with nature tress, plants and flowers it was so beautiful. Wallabies around tall grass and river red gum tress, surrounding the nature walk. We reached the end of the walk and had arrived at Mutitjulu Water hole. While we were walking, we saw tjantu (bush plums) and ili (figs) on the trees.

Near the water hole there was a bench. The three of us went and sat down on the chair. We closed our eyes to feel the strong connection with nature. We heard the

sound of the splashing water and the sweet noises of animals. All surrounding us, as we remembered from our grandma's dreamtime stories about Kuniya (the woman python) and her spirits are here. The caves she protects are still used by Anangu people where we proudly belonged.

We plucked some plums and figs to eat along the path.

The surrounding was filled with tall trees and it leads us to a familiar and connected to our lives for a long times ago.

"Kulpi Mutitjulu" cried Yarran as he waved his hands for us to follow.

Kulpi Mutitjulu (Mutitjulu cave) was where rock art displays Tjukurpa stories. They have been passed from generation to generation. Here is where our ancestors would paint drawings for us to get a better understanding about our traditional heritage. All the paints they used were natural. The dry materials were placed on flat stones, crushed and mixed with kapi (water) or animal fat. Purku (black charcoal), tjunpa/unu (white ash), tutu (red ochre) and untanu (yellow ochre). Our feelings are overflow seeing our ancestors painting skills. We amazed by their knowledge of ability to connect with nature on painting to display their practical lives for a long time. Rock arts made up joy. We made our mind to step forward from the rock cave. But all of us filled with sorrow. We felt we are away from our loving elders that lived here for a long time ago.

We carried on walking on the path that leads to many heritage views. In the distances I saw a big cave Kulpi Nyiinkaku (The Teaching cave).

"Monaro and Yarran, look up ahead, Kulpi Nyiinkaku" I whisper in their ears softly.

Kulpi Nyiinkaku was used by the Anangu elders to teach bush boys like us how to travel and survive in this country. When the Mala people (The Anangu ancestors)

arrived at Uluru, Nyiinkaku (bush boys) camped here. Their grandfathers would paint pictures on this cave to teach bosh boys to catch Kuka (food animals).

Looking around I remembered coming here when I was younger holding my grandfathers hand as he pointed to each painting, explaining each one. I was half the size I am now. Memories flood through me. I looked around remembering each one and wanted to reach out and touch each one. Beautiful colors, pictures of animals, spears and humans everywhere. As we were walking inside the cave our toes touch the ruff and dry path colored in orange. Now we are in front of our ancestors. We saw their tireless faces looking at us. All of those made me proud to be a part of Anangu tradition where I belonged.

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