

Back at the Isa

John Williamson

Big galvanised roofs and monster pipes black
Pink and white clouds from a chimney stack
Red dust and hawks in the wind out back
And here I am at the Isa
What do you do in a town like the Isa
Retrenched at 50 become an old miser
Drink yourself blind so you're none the wiser
Sit at home with the race form and whinge
Just over the hill in his own backyard
The landscape becomes a picture postcard
Where the colours are soft but the life is hard
On the stations here at the Isa
Tonight's the night of the rodeo ball
Before riders and bull and horses stand tall
While out in the park some black people sprawl
And share their money on flagons
There's so much more to be understood
Before coming out here like Robin Hood
The do-gooders do more harm than good
Without really knowing the Isa
Through the Leichhardt East
Where fools gold flashes
Fossick around for Maltese Crosses
Flog them off to the tourist buses
See ghost gums under the moon
Some really battle some make do
The luckier ones make a quid and pull through
Some perch at the bar like a caged cockatoo
But that's nothing new at the Isa
And it takes a special kind of girl
To stay out here in this rugged world
Keep your dignity when the oaths are hurled
I pay my respects to you
And I'll raise my glass to an outback town
To that weathered spirit that won't back down
It takes the courage of a rodeo clown
To stick it out at the Isa
Big galvanised roofs and monster pipes black
Pink and white clouds from a chimney stack
Red dust and hawks in the wind out back
And here I am at the Isa
Never thought I'd return to this lonely track
And here I am back at the Isa