

Drover's Boy

John Williamson

They couldn't understand why the drover cried
As they buried the drover's boy
The drover had always seemed so hard
To the men in his employ

A bolting horse, the stirrup lost
And the drover's boy was dead
A shovel of dirt, a mumbled word
And it's back to the road ahead
And forget about the drover's boy

And they couldn't understand why the drover cut
A lock of the dead boy's hair
And put it in the band of his battered old hat
As they watched him standing there

And he told them, "Take the cattle on
I'll sit with the boy a while."
A silent thought, a pipe to smoke
And it's ride another mile
And forget about the drover's boy
Forget about the drover's boy

And they couldn't make out why the drover and the boy
Was camped so faraway
For the tall white man and the slim black boy
Never had much to say

And the boy would be gone at the break of dawn
Tail the horses, carry on
While the drover roused the sleeping men
Daylight, hit the road again
And follow the drover's boy
Follow the drover's boy

In the Camowheel pub they talked about
The death of the drover's boy
They drank their rum with the stranger
Who'd come from the Kimberley Run Fitzroy

And he told of the massacre in the west
Barest details, guess the rest
Shoot the bucks, grab a gin, cut her hair
Break her in, call her a boy, the drover's boy
Call her a boy, the drover's boy

So when they build that stockman's hall of fame
And they talk about the droving game
Remember the girl who was bed mate and died
Rode with the drover, side by side
Watched the bullocks, flayed the hide
Faithful wife but never a bride
Bred his sons for the cattle run
Don't weep for the drover's boy
Don't mourn for the drover's boy -
But don't forget the drover's boy