The Dust of Uruzgan

Lee Kernaghan

In the ring they call me Warlord my mother calls me Paul
You can call me Private Warren when you're filing your report
As to how I came to be here this is what I understand
In this hospital in Germany from the dust of Uruzgan

You'd just turned twenty eight just bought a new car
When you joined the first Battalion of the Big 1 RAR
We were next up for deployment I South Afghanistan
To combat the insurgence in the dust of Uruzgan

It took seven months of training just to get into the joint
There were push-ups and procedures and there was death by powerpoint
Then the RSOI course in Ali Al Salaam
But nothing can prepare you for the dust of Uruzgan

Me and Benny sat together flying into Kandshar
We sucked back on our near beers in the Camp Baker Bar
We were up at 05:30 we were on the Herc and out
In twenty flying minutes we were in to Tarin Kowt

We shook hands as the boys ripped out from MRTF one
And pretty soon were out patrolling in the Afghan summer sun
Walking through the green zones with a styer in my hand
Body armour chafing through the dust of Uruzgan

Well we started up near Chora working fourteen hours a day
Mentoring a Kandak from the Afghan Fourth Brigade
Down through the Baluchi into eastern Dorafshan
Working under open skies in the dust of Uruzgan

It's a long, long way from Townsville not like any place you've seen
Suddenly you're walking through from the fourteenth century
Women under burkhas tribal warlords rule a land
Full of goats and huts and jungle trucks in the dust of Uruzgan

And the education minister can neither read nor write
And the minister for women runs a knock shop there at night
They've been fighting there forever over water, food and land
Murdering each other in the dust of Uruzgan

There's nothing about this province that's remotely fair or just
But worse than the corruption is the endless bloody dust
It's as fine as talcum powder on the ground and in the air
And it gets into your eyes and it gets into your hair

And it gets in to your weapon and it gets in to your boots
When bureaucrats all show up here it gets in to their suits
And it gets in the machinery and it foils every plan
There's something quite symbolic bout the dust of Uruzgan

Still the people can be gracious and their courteous and smart
And when the children look into your eyes they walk into your heart
Face each day with courage and each year without a plan
Beyond scratching for survival in the dust of Uruzgan

But the Taliban are restless keep the people terrorized
With roadside bombs and hangings and leaving letters in the night

And they have no useful vision for the children of this land
But to keep them praying on their knees in the dust of Uruzgan

It was a quite Saturday morning when the two shop made a call
On a compound of interest to the east of COP Mashal
We had some information they were building IED's
So we condoned and we searched it in accord with SOP's

I was on the west flank picket propped there with Ben
There to keep a watchful eye out while the other blokes went in
We knew the signs of danger from the TTP's we'd learned
But the nationals were moving back and forth without concern

We'd been static there for hours when I shifted slightly back
My foot tripped a AP mine and everything went black
I woke up on a gurney flat out on my back
Had to ask them seven times just to get the facts

That I lived to tell the story through a simple twist of fate
The main change lay ten foot away from the pressure plate
You see the mine was linked by det cord to a bid charge laid by hand
Hidden under Benny by the dust of Uruzgan

I was a Queensland champ Thai Boxer now I look south on my knee
And all I see is bed sheets where my foot use to be
Benny's dead and buried underneath Australian sand
But his spirit's out there wandering through the dust – the dust of Uruzgan

Now I'm going back to Townsville it's the city of my birth
Well some go back to Ballarat and some go back to Perth
I'll be living with my mother who's still trying to understand
Why we're spending blood and treasure in the dust – in the dust of Uruzgan

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