

Hear My Cries

Browwyn Fredericks

Called a big fish,
giant cod,
old groper.
These are my ancestral waters.
I belong here,
they belong to me.
Like my kin,
animals and plants,
Aboriginal peoples.
We are all related,
bound by
Songlines,
Storylines,
Totems.

I washed up on the Keppel Sands Beach,
Central Queensland.
The land of the Darumbal.
Where fish and water lilies
fill the billabongs and creeks.
Where green frogs sing in delight when it rains.
Where humans discard what they no longer want.
I got caught by fishermen out past the islands of the
Woppaburra.
Where the whoop whoop birds called,
where the curloos and thicknees wooed
and
wailed as
a large metal hook wrenched me up,
ripping open my throat,
leaving me gasping.

My eyes popped,
the speed of deep water to air.
I was discarded back,
to my ancestral waters.
I was,
2 metres long,
288 kilograms in weight,
150 years old.
I died from an undignified
unnatural death...

I worry about my relatives,
within these waterways of blue.
Those you call dolphins, turtles, dugongs
and whales.
Who are wedded to the islands
and mainland
through Storylines,
Songlines,
Totems.
I worry about them,
dying in the same way.
I fear for my future generations.
There are too few of us left,
in our ancestral waters.

I ask that you hear my cries,
hear my sadness,
hear my pain...
Don't let my unnatural death go unheard.