



## Waiting for the Past

*Les Murray*

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# Waiting for the Past

*Les Murray*

## **Waiting for the Past** Les Murray

The clearly focused lyrics of Les Murray's *Waiting for the Past* are rich in topographies and the languages peculiar to them —wonga vines, lyre birds, gum trees, shrike thrushes, tallow boughs, boab trees, the octopus in Wylies Baths killed by sterilising chlorine. With the erasures the modern world brings, words, landscapes, and lives descend to the Esperanto of the modern. The poet, with a salutary resistance, rejects the computer and the incursions of the leveling Modern in favor of old-fashioned typewriters, unlikely saints, lived-in places, farming in the spirit of ancestors. This is the past he waits for in scenes unmade by human carelessness, not only in his rural place but across the world. The poems speak of the unspeakable, including old age, vertigo, illness, and the durable resilience of married love.

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