

# TEARS OF WYBALENNA

(Neil Murray)

*Wybalenna was a settlement on Flinders Island in Bass Strait. Tasmanian Aboriginals were brought there by George Augustus Robinson as a way to end the "Black War" and to protect them from the depredations of settlers and bushrangers. If they surrendered to government control, the natives were promised they would return to their homelands once things had quietened down. This promise was never honoured.*

Truganini went to save the last of the clans  
From exterminating guns in Van Dieman's land  
She brought em into Hobart, with the white man she trusted  
Robinson it was who never got flustered  
He said I'll take you all over to Flinders Island  
To civilize and Christianise you  
You'll be safe  
at Wybalenna.

Well he promised them they'd all return some day  
To their homelands that lay beyond the waves  
but in the cold and the damp people started dying  
Robinson kept his journal tidy  
he tried to replace their cultural ways  
But all they had to show they'd been betrayed  
were tears  
tears of Wybalenna.

In 13 years a hundred of them died  
Only 47 made it out alive  
Robinson moved on to further his career  
Leaving Truganini and her mob in constant fear  
They were cast off down in Oyster Cove  
Haunted by memories they'll always own  
of the tears  
tears of Wybalenna

Colonisation spreads like a disease  
the Imperial flag flaps lazy in the breeze  
Horse sweat and leather, clink of iron and steel  
Native people in chains, the suffering they still feel  
All the sorrow in the world can be traced right back  
To an invading force and the humanity they lack  
It's the same  
tears of Wybalenna

Governments don't learn from their mistakes  
they're still locking asylum seekers away  
Desperate poor souls just wanna be safe  
To escape from war and the misery it makes  
And they languish in detention for many a long year  
And their cries for justice fall on deaf ears  
like the tears  
tears of Wybalenna.

Flinders Island is a jewel in Bass Strait  
Hard to believe it was such a sad place  
But to stand in the ruins of that lonely graveyard  
Is to know where old people did it so hard  
and the ground still holds their dear bones  
only wallabies and wombats over it roam  
And you can feel  
tears of Wybalenna  
You can feel  
tears of Wybalenna