

D'harawal

DREAMING STORIES

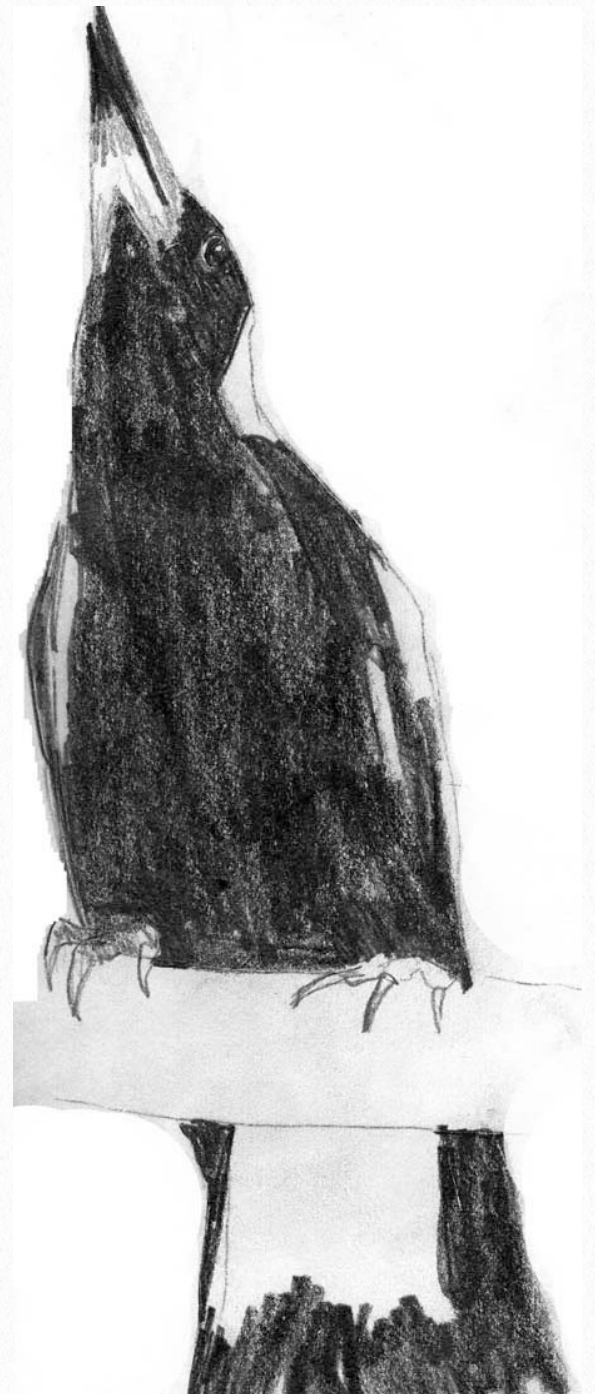
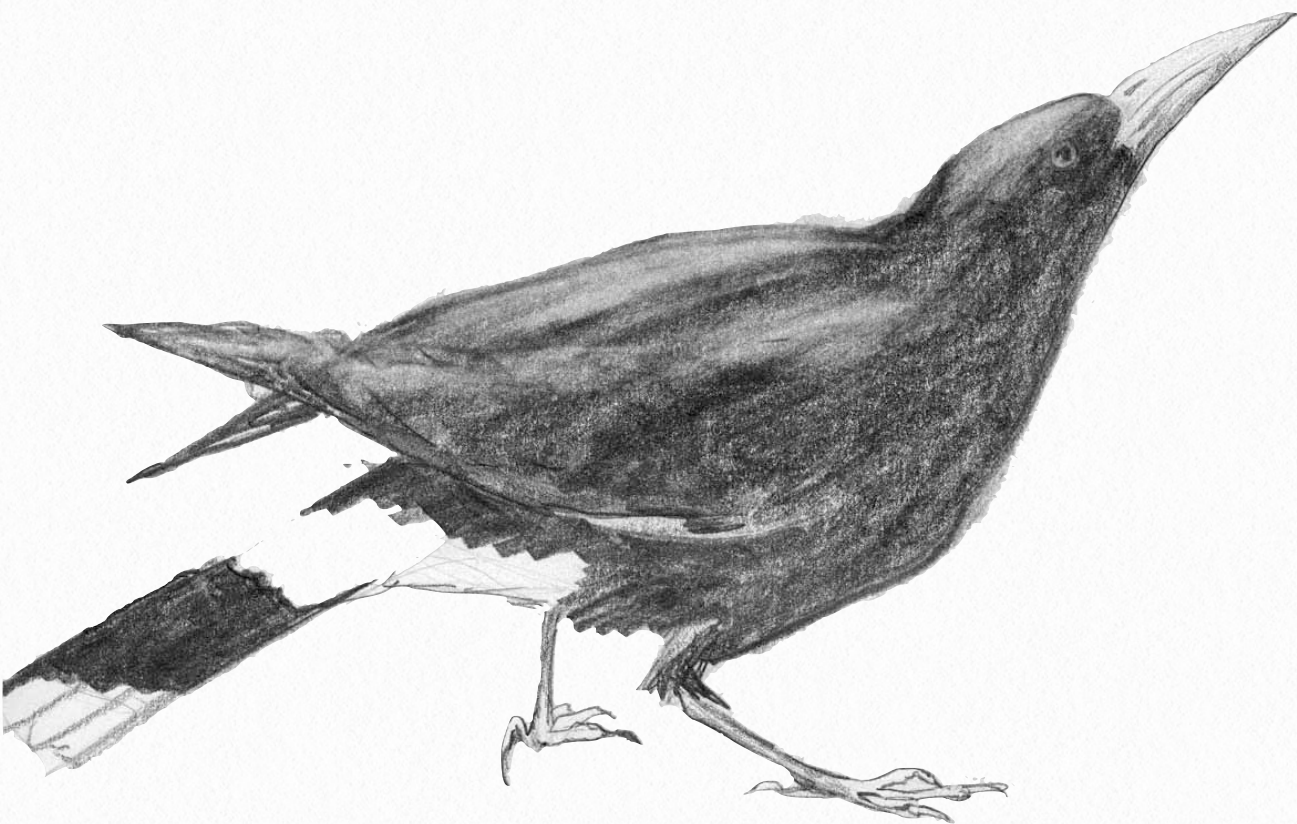
Frances Bodkin

Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews

illustrated by Lorraine Robertson

Diru'wunan and Diruwun

The Currawongs and the Magpies



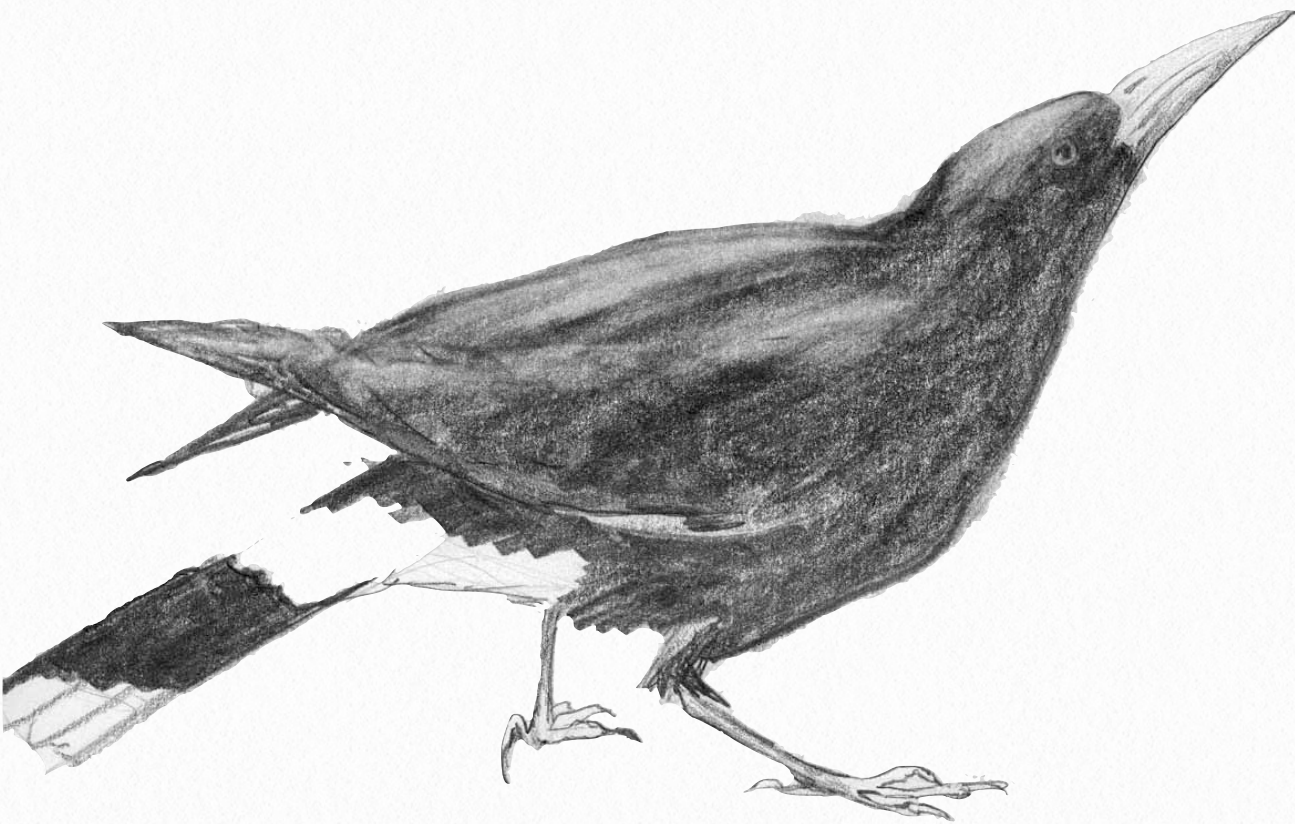
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Foreword

Throughout the past two hundred years, society has come to regard the Koori Dreaming stories as something akin to the fairy stories they were told as children.

However, for thousands upon thousands of years, the stories in this book were used as a teaching tool to impart to the youngest members of the clans the laws which governed the cultural behaviour of clan members. The successive attempts to destroy the Koori culture and assimilate The People into the Euro-centric population were unsuccessful, and the Dreaming Stories were able to continue in their disguise as charming legends where animals became the heroes and the heroines.

Historians and anthropologists have studied the Koori culture since they first arrived on this continent, and have come to the conclusion that the D'harawal culture is dead. Of, course, this has been done without reference to the descendants of that culture, and without even asking the proper questions. The D'harawal culture is not dead, it is a strong, living, vital culture of the Sydney and South Coast regions that just had to go underground for a while to be able to survive. Now that the right questions have been asked, we have the key to unlock a vast wealth of knowledge of this part of the country in which we live.

It is difficult to explain to a society based on commerce fuelled by the profit motive, that D'harawal culture is not based on the ownership of tangible things like land and dwellings and possessions, but it does have a very strong sense of ownership of information. That information, particularly in story form, was not traded, but could be given, and given freely, but its ownership was respected, those stories were not told or passed on by those to whom they had been given, but the knowledge in them was used by the receiver whilst ever they walked in the Land of the D'harawals, This Land.

It is hoped that our present society is now mature enough to be able to accept the Koori Dreaming stories as they were, as they are, and as they were always destined to be; tools to teach the Children of The People about living with Earth, the Mother, in peace and harmony.

Each story contains several layers of knowledge, the first of which are the secrets. Which can only be passed on or discussed with persons of the same level of knowledge or higher than the story teller. These secrets are never told within a legend, but are remembered separately from the legend itself. These are very important components of any legend, and it is the knowledge of the secrets which determines the level of the person's worthiness to ownership of that story.

The next layer of knowledge within the stories was the law, or laws, to be obeyed. The laws of the stories were told and often repeated after the telling of each story, after which the laws were discussed and their application in life demonstrated in a variety of ways.

The third layer of knowledge contained in each story was the lessons which could be learned from the story and the lessons were taught to all members of the group as well as visitors. These lessons introduced Peoples to the means to live in harmony with each other, and the land and its resources.

In this series of D'harawal Law Legends, there are many lessons to be learned. The D'harawals believed that children learned better and more quickly when they were encouraged to work through a problem, rather than be told the answer. By sharing the stories of our ancestors with you, it is hoped that not only will you recognise and learn the lessons and laws of the Peoples of This Land, but you will also come to understand and respect the culture of The People and our feelings and relationship with the land.

The stories do not in themselves act as an instruction manual - rather they point the way and encourage The People to think, to learn and to live. It is hoped that by sharing our stories, you too may be able to think, to learn and to live in This Land.

With understanding and respect for each other we can learn to more easily share This Land and live together in peace and harmony.

Frances Bodkin

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A very, very long time ago, Warnan'nan, the People of the Raven became worried. There had not been any rain from the time of the blooming of the Boo'kerrikin to the time of the blooming of the Ker'wan. The creeks and rivers were drying up, and even some of the deepest waterholes were become shallow enough for children to walk across.

And at night, the Earth sang a song of thirst, pleading for water to soothe her parched skin.

Oftentimes, the People of the Raven would look at the skies, watching and hoping that the Cloud Spirits would come and deliver their burden of rain. But the skies remained blue and cloudless.

The People of the Raven went to Wiritjiribin, the People of the Lyrebird, to seek their advice, but found that they, too were suffering from lack of rain, although their sweet water came from the Earth herself, and not from the skies like the other peoples.

The People of the Lyrebird were kind to the People of the Raven and invited them to take as much sweet water as they needed. The People of the Raven asked why the People of the Lyrebird were so kind when other Peoples had refused to help them.

The People of the Lyrebird replied that a long, long time ago, the People of the Raven had provided their black feathered cloaks to the children of the Mull'goh, the Black Swan, and providing the sweet water was the repayment of a kin debt.

Some of the clans of the People of the Raven heard this and wondered.

Diru'wunan, The Currawong clan and Diruwun, the Magpie clan called a meeting to discuss how the People of the Raven had saved them during the time of great cold, and how that kin debt had never been repaid.

Thus, it was decided that the Currawong clan would seek the Cloud Spirits whilst the Magpie clan would sing a particular song that would guide the Currawong Clan back to their homelands.

After many adventures the Currawong clan found the Cloud Spirits frolicking on top of a high mountain. With some trepidation, they climbed the mountain and explained to the Cloud Spirits that the Earth was thirsting for rain, and unless they came, many people would die.

The Cloud Spirits replied that they were having too much fun, and refused to follow the Currawongs. One of the Currawong Clan, a very tall, strong warrior, captured one of the Cloud Spirits in a net woven by the women of his clan.

He threw the ends of the net down to the other members of his clan, and together they forced the cloud spirit to travel towards their homelands.

Despite the grumblings of the Cloud Spirit, the Currawong clan were able to hear the special song of the Magpie Clan, which guided their path home.

The other Cloud Spirits followed the imprisoned Cloud Spirit out of curiosity, and when they saw how parched the Earth was, they dropped their rain on the thirsty Earth.

Soon the rivers and creeks began to run again, and the waterholes filled up.

The Earth sang a song of happiness as the rain fell, and the Peoples of the Raven danced in the falling rain.

That is why when the Currawongs fly high in the sky, and the Magpies sing their special song, rain always follows.

Information about the Birds in the Story:

Diru'wun Dee-roo-wan

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE

Scientific Name: *Cracticus tibicen*

The Australian Magpie is black and white. Its nape, upper tail and shoulder are white in males, grey in females and the remainder of the body is black. The eye is chestnut brown.

Australian Magpies live in groups of up to 24 birds year round in a territory wherever there is a combination of trees and adjacent open areas, including parks and playing fields. This territory is actively defended and used for feeding, roosting and nesting.

They inhabit most of Australia, absent only from the densest forests and arid deserts.

The Australian Magpie walks along the ground searching for insects and their larvae. Birds will also take hand-outs from humans and although the Australian Magpie is generally quite tame, during the breeding season some individuals become aggressive towards any intruders which venture too close to their nest sites. The nest is a platform of sticks and twigs with a small interior bowl lined with grass and hair, constructed in the outer branches of a tree, up to 15 m above the ground.

The Australian Magpie has one of the world's most complex bird songs. It is a loud musical flute-like song, often performed as a duet or by groups. An alternative name for the Australian Magpie is Flute Bird.

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Diru'wunan Dee-roo-wuh-nan

PIED CURRAWONG

Scientific Name: *Strepera graculina*

The Pied Currawong is large, mostly black, with a bright yellow eye and a large and black beak. Small patches of white are found under the tail, on the tips and bases of the tail feathers and in a small patch towards the tip of each wing which is visible in flight. The legs are dark grey-black. Both sexes are similar, although the female may sometimes be greyer on the underparts and young Pied Currawongs are duller and browner than the adults.

Pied Currawongs are found throughout eastern Australia but is absent from Tasmania.

They inhabit forests and woodlands, and suburban areas. These birds are seen alone, in pairs or in family

The nest is a bowl of sticks, lined with grasses and other soft material and placed in a high tree fork, up to 20 m above the ground. The material is gathered by both sexes, but the female builds the nest, incubates the eggs, and the male feeds her while she sits on the eggs and for the first week after the chicks hatch and she feeds the chicks.

Pied Currawongs are known for their distinctive, loud and ringing calls which can be far-reaching throughout their territories - a loud "currawong", which gives the bird its name, deep croaks and a wolf whistle.

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