

THE ANZAC'S INCENSE - Denis Kevans

*"Yes, we heard their voices murmur, as the streamers broke and flew,
"I'll love you forever, and forever I'll love you",
Did we live and die in madness, in a waste-land over there,
Just to see Australia's forests churned to woodchips over here?"*

A boarding house in Sydney, an old man sitting there,
The smoke of burning gumleaves drifting around him through the air,
"It's my incense, mate" he tells me, "it comes from down the Coast,
The gumleaves of the forest, the ones I love the most.

"This incense was my wedding gift, it was our wild bouquet,
We breathed in deep the incense, before I sailed away,
A net of moonlight drifting across her face and hair,
And the incense of the gumleaves drifting around us, everywhere.

"She'd parcel up the gumleaves, and she'd post'em far away,
We sweated on the postie, and his parcel, on that day,
In silence we would gather, and breathe the incense in,
The incense of the gumleaves burning in our dixie tin.

"The acrid stink of battle in our incense sped away,
And scenes of home and loved ones, entered in, as bright as day,
And we heard their voices murmur, as the streamers broke and flew -
"I'll wait for you forever, and forever I'll love you".

"Now I stumble through the nightmare of a forest we once knew
And I thought I heard her saying - "Sonny, Sonny, is it you?"
But when I turned to greet her, just a splintered stump I saw,
And the refuse from an army that has won the forest war.

"I had hoped to find the moonlight, as it rested on her hair,
All I saw was litter burning and the smoke fumes everywhere,
I had hoped to smell the incense that was always in the green,
But I only smelt the chain-saws and the stink of dieseline".

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