

## 'Rain from Nowhere' by Murray Hartin

This poem by **Murray Hartin** is one of the most meaningful poems you are ever likely to read. Even if you are not a lover of poetry, please read this one. It is sure to stir your thoughts.

It's emotional and it's serious, and it sends a strong message to us all at this the beginning of springtime. The months approaching summertime are for many, filled with concern, apprehension and uncertainty.

### Rain From Nowhere By Murray Hartin

His cattle didn't get a bid, they were fairly bloody poor,  
What was he going to do? He couldn't feed them anymore,  
The dams were all but dry, hay was thirteen bucks a bale,  
Last month's talk of rain was just a fairytale.

His credit had run out, no chance to pay what's owed,  
Bad thoughts ran through his head as he drove down Gully Road  
'Geez, great grandad bought the place back in 1898,  
Now I'm such a useless bastard, I'll have to shut the gate.'

'Can't support my wife and kids, not like dad and those before,  
Christ, Grandma kept it going while Pop fought in the war.'  
With depression now his master, he abandoned what was right,  
There's no place in life for failures, he'd end it all tonight.

There were still some things to do, he'd have to shoot the cattle first,  
Of all the jobs he'd ever done, that would be the worst.  
He'd have a shower, watch the news, then they'd all sit down for tea.  
Read his kids a bedtime story, watch some more TV.

Kiss his wife goodnight, say he was off to shoot some roos.  
Then in a paddock far away he'd blow away the blues.  
But he drove in the gate and stopped - as he always had  
To check the roadside mailbox - and found a letter from his Dad.

Now his dad was not a writer, Mum did all the cards and mail  
But he knew the style from the notebooks that he used at cattle sales.  
He sensed the nature of its contents, felt moisture in his eyes,  
Just the fact his dad had written was enough to make him cry.

'Son, I know it's bloody tough, it's a cruel and twisted game,  
This life upon the land, when you're screaming out for rain.  
There's no candle in the darkness, not a single speck of light  
But don't let the demon get you, you have to do what's right.'

'I don't know what's in your head but push the bad thoughts well away,  
See, you'll always have your family at the back end of the day.  
You have to talk to someone, and yes I know I rarely did,  
But you have to think about Fiona and think about the kids.'

'I'm worried about you son, you haven't rung for quite a while,  
I know the road you're on 'cause I've walked every bloody mile.  
The date? December 7 back in 1983,  
Behind the shed I had the shotgun rested in the brigalow tree.'

'See, I'd borrowed way too much to buy the Johnson place,  
Then it didn't rain for years  
and we got bombed by  
interest rates.

The bank was at the door, I  
didn't think I had a choice,  
I began to squeeze the  
trigger - that's when I heard  
your voice.'

'You said  
'Where are you Daddy?  
It's time to play our game,  
I've got Squatter all set up,  
you might get General  
Rain.'  
It really was that close,  
you're the one that stopped  
me son,  
And you're the one that  
taught me there's no answer  
in a gun.

'Just remember people love you, good friends won't let you down,  
Look, you might have to swallow pride and get a job in town.  
Just 'til things come good, son, you've always got a choice  
And when you get this letter ring me,  
cause I'd love to hear your voice.'

Well he cried and laughed and shook his head  
then put the truck in gear,  
Shut his eyes and hugged his dad in a vision that was clear,  
Dropped the cattle at the yards, put the truck away  
Filled the troughs the best he could and fed his last ten bales of hay.

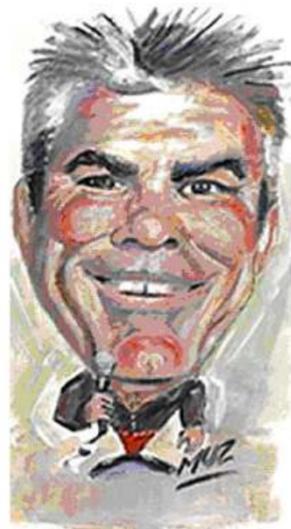
Then he strode towards the homestead,  
shoulders back and head held high,  
He still knew the road was tough but there was purpose in his eye.  
He called for his wife and children, who'd lived through all his pain,  
Hugs said more than words - he'd come back to them again.

They talked of silver linings, how good times always follow bad,  
Then he walked towards the phone, picked it up and rang his Dad.  
And while the kids set up the Squatter, he hugged his wife again,  
Then they heard the roll of thunder and they smelt the smell of rain.

**Murray Hartin**  
February 21, 2007

## Muzza (Murray Hartin)

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[www.murrayhartin.com](http://www.murrayhartin.com)



MUZ  
Murray Hartin

## Ma's Country Kitchen BARBY CLEANING



For flat top gas  
barbys that have  
been sitting  
outside all winter  
and spring  
covered in rust.

Ma can only give  
advice for  
cleaning the  
actual cast iron  
cooking surfaces.

The body of the barby could be painted metal,  
stainless steel or vitreous enamel - and they  
require completely different cleaning  
procedures.

The first thing to do is scrape off the loose and  
flaking rust and then run  
over the surface with a fine wire rust remover  
attached to an electric drill (you can do it by  
hand with a wire brush if you have the time).  
Wash the plate in warm water with a little mild  
soap. Rinse with a cup of white vinegar mixed  
into a bucket of water (this neutralises the  
surface) and let it dry thoroughly.

The next step is to season it. Thoroughly wipe  
the plate with canola oil (grapeseed or sunflower  
are okay but avoid olive oil as it can be too  
acidic). Now heat it until the oil smokes and  
keep rubbing in more oil on paper towels  
(obviously you need to be very careful and do  
this quickly so the oil soaked paper does not  
ignite....Ouch!) until you get an even shiny  
surface.

Shut off the gas and let the plate cool. When it is  
cool enough to touch  
(but not cold) rub on a final coat of oil. It should  
then be sufficiently  
seasoned to use. If the barby plate was heavily  
rusted you might have to  
repeat the seasoning process.

You can maintain the surface by cleaning it with  
tightly bunched newspaper while it is still hot  
(always remember the only barbecues that are  
hard to clean are cold ones). Wipe or spray on a  
protective film of canola oil when it's warm and  
the plate should be ready for next time.

Eazy Peazy!

## Two Little Birdies

I bet most parents and grandparents have sung the **Peter and Paul** rhyme  
'Two Little Birdies' to their kids and grandkids at some time in the past.



Well that rhyme became  
reality recently when ... not  
**Peter and Paul**....but 17  
year old **Kristal Collins...the  
Little Sparrow and Wally  
Sparrow of Country Brecky**  
sang their duet 'Blackboard  
of My Heart'.

**Kristal** also sang 'Pick Me  
Up On Your Way Down'  
and a few other songs which  
showed her singing and her  
choice of songs is on the way  
up.

So **one Little Sparrow** is now  
soaring high and the other one  
needs a little... 'Pick me up!' Ha Ha!

## The Sweet Sound of Sandpaper



Usually it takes years of hard,  
constant playing to wear the varnish  
from an acoustic guitar. Ask **Bill  
Northcott of Gawler Country  
Music Club** how he removed the  
varnish from the **Slim Dusty  
Tribute Show Commemorative  
Guitar**, and you might be surprised  
by his response.

**Willie Nelson** has carved holes  
through the top of the nylon-stringed  
classical guitar he has played for  
decades.

But **Australian guitarist Tommy Emmanuel** prefers to take the direct  
approach. Just like **Bill**, he has been known to take a bit of sandpaper to a  
brand-new guitar, scraping away the finish to the bare wood.

Emmanuel said, "It's done for a reason; to get a certain sound.

And the sounds Emmanuel gets from his collection of custom **Maton**  
guitars range from multiple melodies and rhythms that make a six-string  
guitar harmonise with sounds ranging from Classical Style to the music of  
the Australian outback.

Emmanuel has been performing since childhood, two years after laying  
hands on a guitar for the first time at age 4.ney, tralia, to work as a session  
player, **Air Supply and Men at Work**