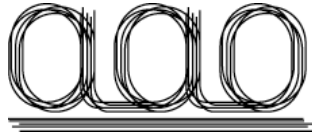




## **Ruby's Story Lyrics**

By Ruby Hunter and Archie Roach © 2003 / 2004

1. A Child Was Born
2. Ngarrindjeri Woman
3. Nopin Kurongk
4. Held Up To The Moon
5. Wash My Soul
6. Daisy Chains
7. Took The Children Away
8. Coolamen Baby
9. Little By Little
10. Down City Streets
11. Old So & So
12. Kura Tungar



## **A Child Was Born**

Hush now, be still  
Something's going to happen tonight  
Oh it will  
Be silent  
Don't make a sound  
Just look there upon this ground

And a child was born tonight  
Breaking the stillness and the quiet  
Shining in the pale moonlight  
Oh a child was born tonight

Right there (x4)

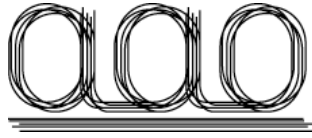
She was born too soon  
Rubbed in ashes, held up to the moon  
Sweet breezes sigh  
Listen to the baby cry

A child was born tonight  
Breaking the stillness and the quiet  
Shining in the pale moonlight  
A child was born tonight

A child was born tonight  
Breaking the stillness and the quiet  
Shining in the pale moonlight  
A child was born tonight

Right there (x4)

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## **Ngarrindjeri Woman**

I am Ngarrindjeri Woman  
And I'm proud of who I am  
Ngarrindjeri Woman native to this traditional land  
In our mother's land  
Our mother's land (x2)

And when they took us all away  
Prayed for us not to stray  
Prayed upon our mother's land  
While we were locked away  
In our mother's land  
Our mother's land (x2)

I am Ngarrindjeri Woman  
And I stand so proud and tall  
I remember stories when I was a little girl  
In our mother's land  
Our mother's land (x2)

I am Ngarrindjeri Woman  
And I'm still here today  
To carry on our culture  
In the Ngarrindjeri Woman business ways  
In our mother's land  
Our mother's land (x2)

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## **Nopun Kurongk (Go to the River)**

Don't say goodbye my child  
And always look behind you  
To the beautiful life  
And all the things that remind you  
Of being free  
That remind you of being free  
Nopun kurongk, Nukun kurongk

I sang my songs  
To some children in Meningee  
Then a feeling so strong  
Started coming over me  
Like I was free  
Yeah, I felt like I was free  
Nopun kurongk, Nukun kurongk

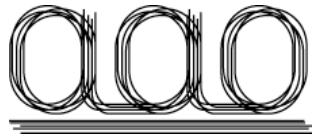
My grandmother I can see  
Wrapped around her thatki (legs)  
Standing safely on the shore  
Underneath the dress she wore  
We were hidden secretly from the welfare 'cos you see  
Granny knew they'd taken children  
Many times before  
Nopun kurongk, Nukun kurongk

Say goodbye to my friends  
These city shadows chill me to the bone  
And I'm going back again  
To that place where they took me from  
To my home  
Yeah I feel like going home  
Nopun kurongk, Nukun kurongk

Go to the river, look to the river



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## **Held up To the Moon In My Grandfather's Hands**

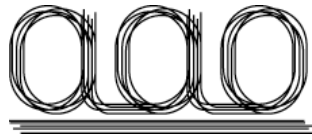
In 56 when the floods come down  
No-one could get in, no-one could get round  
Born at a billabong, my father's homeland  
Held up to the moon in my grandfather's hands (x2)

I was born premature and they kept me warm  
They looked at the fire, grey ashes on the ground  
Saw a baby in warm ashes being rubbed down  
Like a little rabbit being cooked in the ground (x2)

It's close to the river billabong you see  
You cannot use water to wash a newborn down  
Grey ashes from the fire, best baby powder round  
Held up to the moon in my grandfather's hands (x2)

I was born premature and they kept me warm  
They looked at the fire, grey ashes on the ground  
Saw a baby in warm ashes being rubbed down  
Like a little rabbit being cooked in the ground (x2)

© Ruby Hunter April 2004



## **Wash My Soul in the River's Flow**

Life is like, like a river  
You only reap what you sow  
I hope it's good what you give her  
In return for what you grow  
I'm going down, down the river today  
I'm jumping in the water  
Wash my sins away  
I listened to a story from long ago  
Well I'm jumping in the water, wash my soul in the rivers flow

People moving like a river  
On its way to the sea  
And we're sorry all that you give her  
Ain't nothing but tears and misery

I'm going down, down the river today  
I'm jumping in the water  
Wash my sins away  
I listened to a story from long ago  
Well I'm jumping in the water  
Wash my soul in the rivers flow

Better be careful what we give her  
'Cos It's just like society  
For if there's a hope, hope for the river,  
You know there's hope for you and me

Life is like, like a river  
You only reap what you sow  
I hope it's good what you give her  
In return for what you grow  
I'm going down, down the river today  
I'm jumping in the water  
Wash my sins away



I listened to a story from long ago  
I'm jumping in the water, wash my soul in the rivers flow  
I'm jumping in the water, wash my soul in the rivers flow

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## **Daisy chains, String Games and Knuckle Bones.**

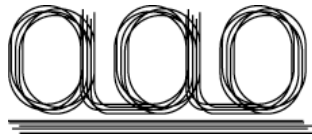
Daisy chains, Strings Games and Knuckle Bones  
Before we were taken from our Kurongk home  
I remember when I was young  
Me and my sister were having fun  
Making daisy chains, short and long  
Daisy chains, Strings Games and Knuckle Bones  
Before we were taken from our Kurongk home

String games, string games, we would play  
Two players is the only way to play  
Cup and Saucer, Build the Bridge, Rock the Cradle,  
This is what we did  
Oh Daisy Chains, String Games and Knuckle Bones  
Daisy chains, Strings Games and Knuckle Bones  
Before we were taken from our Kurongk home

Knuckle bones, knuckle bones we would play  
Collected from the family stews in those days  
Scrub them, wash them, dry them in the sun  
And paint them pretty colours when the game begun

Daisy chains, Strings Games and Knuckle Bones  
Before we were taken from our Kurongk home  
Daisy chains, Strings Games and Knuckle Bones  
Before we were taken from our Kurongk home

© Ruby Hunter 2004



## **Took the Children Away**

This story's right, this story's true  
I would not tell lies to you  
Like the promises they did not keep  
And how they fenced us in like sheep  
Said to us come take our hand  
Set us up on mission land  
They taught us to read, to write and pray  
Then they took the children away  
Took the children away  
The children away  
Snatched from their mother's breast  
Said this is for the best  
Took them away

The welfare man, the policeman  
Said you've got to understand  
Cos' we'll give to them what you can't give  
And teach them how to really live  
Teach them how to live they said  
Humiliated them instead  
And they taught them that and taught them this  
And others taught them prejudice  
Oh took the children away  
Oh the children away  
Breaking their mothers heart  
Tearing us all apart  
Took them away

One dark day on Framlingham  
Came and did not give a damn  
My mother cried go get their dad  
He came running, fighting mad  
Mother's tears were falling down  
And my Dad shaped up and stood his ground.  
He said you touch my kids and you gotta fight me boys  
Then they took us from our family.  
Took us away  
Yeah took us away  
Grabbed from our mother's breast



Said this is for the best  
Took us away.

.../2



Told us what to do and say  
Taught us all these are white man's ways  
But then they split us up again  
Gave us gifts to ease the pain  
Sent us off to foster homes  
And as we grew up oh we felt alone  
Cause we were acting white  
And feeling black  
One sweet day all the children came back

Yeah the children came back  
Yeah the children came back  
Back where their hearts grow strong  
Back where they all belong  
The children came back  
Said the children came back  
Oh the children came back  
Back where they understand  
Back to their mother's land  
The children came back

Back to their mother  
Back to their father  
Back to their sister  
Back to their brother  
Back to their people  
Back to their land  
All the children came back  
All the children came back  
Yeah the children came back  
Yes I came back.

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## **Coolamen Baby**

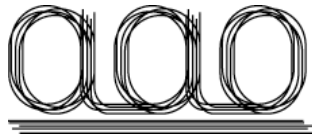
Coolamen baby floating away  
Coolamen baby floating away  
Daddy waded into the  
river up to his waist

To bring the baby  
to the safety of the riverbank  
Coolamen baby floating away  
Coolamen baby floating away  
while Daddy was cleaning fishing net  
facing other way  
Coolamen baby was taken from dry land

Coolamen Baby floating away  
Coolamen Baby floating away  
Daddy was cleaning fishing net  
Facing other way  
When river water tide came in  
Took baby from dry land.

Coolamen Baby floating away  
Coolamen Baby floating away  
Coolamen Baby floating away  
Coolamen Baby floating away

© Ruby Hunter 2004



## **Little by Little**

When I was a baby we had no home  
And we weren't the only family, we were not alone  
But Daddy built a shelter from the wind and rain  
Through the years I've been building this home  
Gonna build it solid, gonna build it strong  
Goin' to build it myself, I'm an independent man

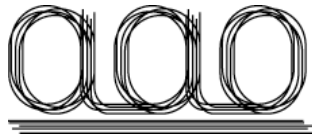
So sing now little by little and stone by stone  
Gonna build this building on my own  
And nobody can say this is mine but me  
Well little by little and stone by stone  
Gonna build this building on my own  
And nobody can say that this is mine but me

When I was a young man, drifted around  
Here and there from town to town  
Getting drunk, drinking red, red wine  
Then one day I realized  
When I met this girl with those big brown eyes  
Oh I knew she'd be a friend of mine

So singing now little by little and stone by stone  
Gonna build this building on my own  
And nobody can say this is mine but me  
Yeah little by little and stone by stone  
Gonna build this building on my own  
And nobody can say this is mine but me

Ain't nobody gonna tear this building down  
Ain't nobody gonna tear this building down  
It's built inside of me yeah where nobody else can see  
Ain't nobody going to tear this building down

Well we had some trouble and we had some strife



Had to quit my drinking, had to change my life  
I had to do it for my family  
When I quit drinking it got harder still  
But I know there's a way where there's a will  
But I won't give up until we all are free

.../2

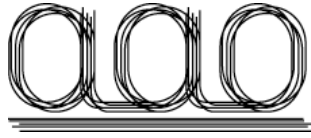
Singing now little by little and stone by stone  
Gonna build this building on my own  
And nobody can say this is mine but me  
Little by little and stone by stone  
Gonna build this building on my own  
And nobody can say that this is mine but me

Ain't nobody gonna tear this building down  
Ain't nobody gonna tear this building down  
Cos' it's built inside of me yeah where nobody else can see  
Ain't nobody going to tear this building down

Ain't nobody gonna tear this building down  
Ain't nobody gonna tear this building down  
Cos' it's built inside of me yeah where nobody else can see  
Ain't nobody going to tear this building down

Little by little and stone by stone  
Gonna build this building on my own  
And nobody can say this is mine but me  
Yeah little by little and stone by stone  
Gonna build this building on my own  
And nobody can say that this is mine but me  
Nobody but me

© Archie Roach 2004



## **Down City Streets**

Crawled out of bushes early morn  
Used newspapers to keep me warm  
Then I'd have to score a drink  
Calm my nerves, help me to think

Down city streets I would roam  
I had no bed, I had no home  
And there was nothing that I owned  
Used my fingers as a comb  
In those days when I was young  
Drinking and fighting was no fun  
It was daily living for me  
I had no choice  
It was meant to be

Now I'm a woman, I'm not alone  
I am married, I have children of my own  
Now I have something I call my own  
These are my children  
This is my home  
I look around and understand  
How street kids feel when they're put down

Down city streets I would roam  
I had no bed, I had no home  
And there was nothing that I owned  
Used my fingers as a comb

I look around and understand  
How street kids feel when they're put down

© Ruby Hunter



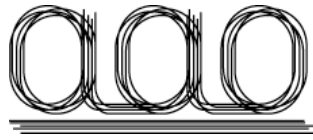
**Old So and So** © Archie Roach 2004

The first time I saw Ruby, it were like a movie  
While I was walking down the stairs  
She was standing in the foyer when I first saw her  
When I first saw her standing there and I asked,  
“Where do the people go?”  
She said, “Just follow me and I will show you the way”

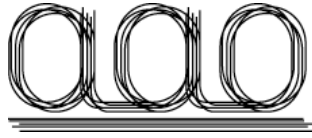
And she could not stop talking  
While we were walking  
Down the street to Victoria Square  
We passed by that fountain  
Beneath that lofty mountain  
And spoke to the people who were there  
She asked, “Ah have you seen old so and so?”  
But they just shook their heads and answered, “No, not today.”  
She was a princess and this city was her throne  
She lived in a palace of concrete and stone  
He was a stranger and he felt all alone  
Till he met this princess  
That young vagabond

Now while they were talking  
They kept on lookin’ at me when I sat down  
She said, “I met him at the Palace,  
And thought I might as well as say hello and show him around.”  
She said, “Oh but I saw him a long time ago on Happy Hammond’s TV show.”

Now we went down to the hotel and people there were not well  
So we sat down and shouted them a beer  
And they said hello to Ruby and said hello to me  
They asked her, “Well who do we have here?”  
She said, “Well I saw him a long time ago on Happy Hammond’s TV show.”  
And he smiled



She was a princess and this city was her throne  
And she lived in a palace of concrete and stone  
He was a stranger and he felt all alone  
Till he met this princess that young vagabond (x2)



## **Kura (River) Tung(ar) Songs and Stories**

Kura Tung(ar) Kura Tung(ar), new and old  
River song and stories, new and old

From the mouth of the Coorong  
A song and story unfolds  
To the heart of the redbank where the mighty rivers flow  
Kura Tung(ar) Kura Tung(ar), new and old  
River songs and stories, new and old

Told to many, many who knew  
Told to, told to a few  
Kura Tung(ar)  
River songs and stories, new and old

Dancer dance, dancer strong  
Dancer dance, dance along  
Just like a river flowing along  
Kura Tung(ar), new and old  
New and old (x3)

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