

We The People
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Good Day to You. The recent bush fires in Australia were catastrophic and reminded me of Dorothea Mackeller and her poem 'My Country' and of droughts and flooding rains. Its disturbing to realise we are probably in for worse as the years roll on as nothing is done to protect this wild primitive nation from climate change. Now fire is an evil thing when its wild and so we have enormous respect for the Aussie fire fighters who with charred blackened faces, fight to keep us safe and preserve our homes. We also remember the marvellous folk who take care of injured wildlife and their habitat after the bush fire passes. Recently I made a great new friend in a contemporary Australian poet by the name of Rupert McCall. Rupert writes in a form and cadence reminiscent of the greats like Banjo Patterson and is a full time poet after seeing the light and chucking in work as a solicitor. Twenty five years ago he wrote a poem called '[Green and Gold Malaria](#)' and recently added a line or two and dedicated this to our national heroes, the bush fire fighters. With Rupert's personal permission here now is the poem.

Green and Gold Malaria

*The day would soon arrive when I could not ignore the rash
I was obviously ill and so I called on Doctor Nash,
This standard consultation would adjudicate my fate
I walked into his surgery and I gave it to him straight,
"Doc, I wonder if you might explain this allergy of mine
I get these pins and needles running up and down my spine,
From there, across my body, it will suddenly extend
My neck will feel a shiver and the hairs will stand on end,
And then there is that symptom that a man can only fear
It's a choking in the throat and the crying of a tear,
Well, the doctor scratched his melon with a rather worried look
His furrowed brow suggested that the news to come was crook,
"What is it Doc"? I motioned, "Have I got a rare disease?
I'm man enough to cop it sweet so give it to me please,
"I'm not to sure" he answered , in a puzzled kind of way
It seems you've some kind of fever but it's hard for me to say,
When is it that you feel this most peculiar condition
I thought for just a moment....then I gave him my position.*

*"Doc, I get it when I'm standing in an Anzac Day parade
And I get it when the anthem of my native land is played,
I get it when Meninga makes a Kiwi-crunching run
And when Border grits his teeth to score a really gutsy ton.
I got it back in 91 when Farr-Jones held the Cup
I shivered at Royal Ascot when Black Caviar got up
I get it when the Banjo takes me down the Snowy River
And Matilda sends me waltzing with a billy boiling shiver,
I get it when I see our farmers fighting for their names
I get it when our fire fighters walk toward the flames,
It hit me hard when Bertrand raised the boxing kangaroo
And when Perkins won from lane eight
Well, the rashes were true blue*

So tell me Doc" I questioned, "Am I really gonna die?"
He broke into a smile before he looked me in the eye,
He fumbled with his stethoscope and pushed it out of reach
He wiped away a tear then he gave this stirring speech
From the beaches here in Queensland son, to the sweeping shores of Broome
On the harbour banks of Sydney with the Waratahs' in bloom
From Uluru at sunset to the mighty Tasman sea
In the Adelaide cathedrals at the roaring MCG,
From the Great Australian Bight to the Gulf of Carpentaria
The medical profession call it..... **"Green and Gold Malaria"**
But forget about the text books son, the truth I shouldn't hide
The rash that you've contracted here, that's 'good old Aussie pride
I'm afraid that you were born with it and one thing is for sure,
You'll die with it young man because there isn't any cure.

God bless the fire fighters of Australia.

Rupert McCall's latest poetry collection called 'Golden Soil' is available from his web site rupertmccall.com.au

This poem called **Green and Gold Malaria** is in the book so check it out at his web site.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley