The Swagman's Rest
Banjo Paterson

We buried old Bob where the bloodwoods wave

At the foot of the Eaglehawk;

We fashioned a cross on the old man's grave,

For fear that his ghost might walk;

We carved his name on a bloodwood tree,

With the date of his sad decease,

And in place of 'Died from effects of spree',

We wrote 'May he rest in peace'.

For Bob was known on the Overland,

A regular old bush wag,

Tramping along in the dust and sand,

Humping his well-worn swag.

He would camp for days in the river-bed,

And loiter and 'fish for whales'.

'I'm into the swagman's yard' he said,

'And I never shall find the rails'

But he found the rails on that summer night

For a better place — or worse,

As we watched by turns in the flickering light

With an old black gin for nurse.

The breeze came in with the scent of pine,

The river sounded clear,

When a change came on, and we saw the sign

That told us the end was near.

But he spoke in a cultured voice and low —

'I fancy they've "sent the route;"

'I once was an army man, you know,

'Though now I'm a drunken brute;

'But bury me out where the bloodwoods wave,

'And if ever you're fairly stuck,

'Just take and shovel me out of the grave

'And, maybe, I'll bring you luck.

'For I've always heard —' here his voice fell weak,

His strength was well-nigh sped,

He gasped and struggled and tried to speak,

Then fell in a moment — dead.

Thus ended a wasted life and hard,

Of energies misapplied —

Old Bob was out of the 'swagman's yard'

And over the Great Divide.

The drought came down on the field and flock,

And never a raindrop fell,

Though the tortured moans of the starving stock

Might soften a fiend from hell.

And we thought of the hint that the swagman gave

When he went to the Great Unseen —

We shovelled the skeleton out of the grave

To see what his hint might mean.

We dug where the cross and the grave posts were,

We shovelled away the mould,

When sudden a vein of quartz lay bare

All gleaming with yellow gold.

'twas a reef with never a fault nor baulk

That ran from the range's crest,

And the richest mine on the Eaglehawk

Is known as 'The Swagman's Rest'.