

## MAN OF THE TREES

For David Forlines, October 10 1992

He carved in wood so beautifully.  
He was also shaman for the spirit of the people here,  
Softly walking in the Mystery,  
Quietly sitting, gently talking of their health,  
Sharing his knowledge of the trees,  
Whilst his words were taken down  
For the tribe's posterity and wealth.

He told us how he was maybe the last,  
One of the very few who dared  
To challenge greed and people's need  
For things they call prosperity;  
To keep alive and even teach  
The ancient knowledge of the tribe  
By reaching out to those who cared;  
And telling all the ancient tales.

He was the very last of those  
Who still knew how to make  
A sea canoe out from a single tree;  
The shape, the way and means  
To cut and hew and stretch  
The fibrous wood, so versatile  
It sometimes seems God-given  
For our houses, boxes, shingle roofs,  
Utensils, beds & benches, tools and even art  
All hewn and shaped with lost and ancient craft.

He was the last, the very last, who knew  
The hidden valleys, holy ground,  
Lost in misty time and cloudy vales,  
Where sacred groves of massive trees still grew.  
He gave up walking in the dark cathedral woods  
And stopped his annual round of pilgrimage  
Since once he found that he was being followed.

He told of how he was enraged that agents of the companies  
Who hew down all the trees round here  
Should still begrudge the very few, the last of these,  
Still large enough to make a sea canoe;  
So that a Governor's stately writ was needed  
To preserve his past and ancient heritage  
And save just two of these for sure,  
The last of a once great forest range,  
From being swallowed up just more and more  
By change & greed and economic sacrilege.

He is a Man of the Trees forever more.