

Foolscap Tombstones

Slim Dusty

With faded ink brandings and covered in dust
Forgotten up there on the shelf out of view
All these old station journals and chequebooks and such
Naming the pound a week people who I knew

The names of old ringers, fencers, and breakers
Camp cooks and drovers and a housemaid or two
Firin' old memories these old station journals
Shrouding the names of bush people I knew

Names of hard toilers and boozers and brawlers
One or two names of good stockmen I knew
Indelibly etched in these old station ledgers
Abandoned up here, choked in dust out of view

Copies of records required by head office
Monthly reports from a man held in trust
Fragile old entries on musty old foolscap
Home for red hornets and red Cooper dust

Close to my hand lies a volume of history
Listing some names long forgotten, deceased
Dead though they might be, today they come back to me reading t
hese pages so dust marked and creased

And who in head office devalues this history with which these o
ld records are so richly filled
How many shareholders honor the memory of the pound a week stoc
kmen a station colt killed

The bush bred young housemaid, where has she wondered
And where is the scribe who composed these reports
And where is the dogger, the drover, the blacksmith
And others who join a parade in my thoughts

Yes, these old station records all covered in red dust
Vanished from sight here, neglected alone
You are fragile yet stronger than any flowery epithets man ever
chiseled on marble headstone

So I'll dust you and mend you and care for you now
And place you out there at the front in full view
And every so often I'll come by and squander some time with the
se pound a week people and you