



Djet

A STORY FROM
EASTERN ARNHEMLAND

TOLD BY **WAKUTHI MARAWILI**
AND WRITTEN IN
DJAPU and **ENGLISH**



DJAPU

DHÄRUK

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Djeṭ

DHUWALNY DHĀWU DJEṬPUY

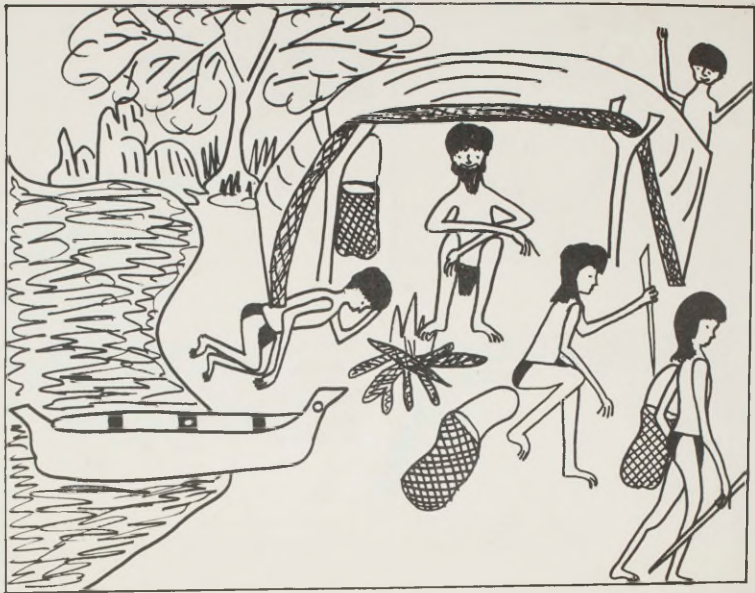
This is a story about the boy
who became a sea-eagle



Dhuwalny Maḡarrpa dhāwu Dundiwuywuṅu djāmawuy

This story, told by Wakuthi Marawili,
comes from the Maḡarrpa clan
of Eastern Arnhem Land

Transcribed, translated and illustrated
by Dundiwuy Wunungmurra



Baman' nãthil birr bewala yukurran nhinan yolŋu'yulŋu. Walal yukurran nhinanydja galki gapuŋur dhanarrŋur, Djet ga nhanŋu Bãpa'mirriŋ, nãndi'mirriŋu mandã, ga nathi'mirriŋu. Yo. Wanganymirr waluy, mandã nãndi'mirriŋuny mandã marrtjin bala retjalil nathaw ganguriw, ga ŋayiny nhinan bãyma' mãlu'mirriŋuwal ga nathi'mirriŋuwal. Bala ŋayi Djet waŋan bitjarr, "Way mãlu. Njarrany yurru marrtji ga gunyan dhuwal bala buma, guyaw."

Long ago in dreamtime there was a boy called Djert who lived with his mother, his father, his grandfather and his step-mother.

They all lived by the sea.



Bala ḡayi marrtjinan, ḡawatthundja nhanḡuway ḡayi garrtjpany, bala raḡi-yaw'yunan. Yaw'yawyunan ḡayi . . . bala marrtjin . . . ḡunyandja . . . , dhaḡaḡdhinan marrtjin, dhaḡaḡdhinan, ḡa yan bili ḡayi burumun' mulkan, bala ḡayi nhāḡal be nhā ḡapulil ḡurrḡan'thinyar, bala ḡayi ḡuyaḡinan.

“Nhā mak ḡunha ḡarra-a-a-a-k, . . . Guya? . . . bay' nhā?”

“Nhā mak ḡunha ḡi!”

“Mak ḡuya ḡunha? . . . bay' nhā . . . ḡuykal? bay' nhā, . . . burrumiḡpa? Bay' nhā . . . ?” ḡalkithinan marrtjin, ḡalki-thinan, ḡa yan bili ḡayi nhāḡal ḡalkiḡur.

“ḡuyaḡa dhuwal ḡarrak yulḡuny. ḡuyaḡa. ḡuyaḡa.”

ḡawatthunyḡa ḡayi, bala roḡiyinan wāḡalila, bili ḡayi wirrkin ḡoḡ-mirriyin.

One bright sunny day, Djert's father sent him crabbing while his mother went into the jungle for yams.

He took his bailer shell and went a little way from the camp. He found a good place and started digging with his bailer shell, and soon it was full of crabs. He also caught a fish near the edge of the water.



Marrrtjinan bala ñayi . . . duwatthunan . . . marrrtjin . . . ga wāṅa mulkan. Nhinanydja ñayi galki gurthalil, bala ñayi bathara. Ñayiny mālu`mirriṅuyuny nhāṅal, bala wāṅanan, “Gāthu, ṅarrakunyidja mulkurr?” “Ñe! Dhuwala barrpany`tja yana gathanmirri.”

“Gāthu, ṅarrakunyidja ṅalthiriny?” “Ñe! Dhuwala barrpany`tja yana gathanmirri.”

“Gāthu, ṅarrakunyidja dhaṅalirṅalirr?” “Ñe! Dhuwala barrpany`tja yana gathanmirri.”

Nhāranan marrrtjin, nhāranan ñayiny guyany, ga yan bili ṅalwuruṅ`thin, bala ñayi lukanan. Bulu ṅanya mālu`mirriṅuyuny ṅāṅ`thun,

“Gāthu, ṅarrakunyidja balwak?”

“Ñe! Dhuwala barrpany`tja yana gathanmirri.”

Ñayiny yan lukan warray, lukan warray, warrpam`thunan marrrtjin, warrpam`thunan, warrpam`thunan, ga yan bili ṅarakalil gutjparr`yun. Bāyṅun ñayi ṅula läy-goran, ga gathar nhanṅukalaṅuw mālu`mirriṅuw.

So, feeling very happy, Djert went back to the camp where his father and grandfather were sitting. His grandfather was a dillybag maker.

Djert gave the crabs to his father and put the fish into the fire. While the fish was still on the fire his father started to ask for some and when it was cooked Djert began to eat it himself.

The father asked for the head, but his son said, “No, I can’t give it to you.”

Djert kept on eating. He didn’t take any notice of his father and grandfather and he ate it all up.



Bala ḡayi mālu'mirriḡuny waḡanan, "Gumurr-djararrk ḡāthu. ḡarrany yurru marrtji ḡuyalil dhipalwala ya! yarrupthun, wal'walyun, dhumuḡu, dḡandḡittjit, dharrkayarrka. Djuku nhokal ḡayi ḡal'yurr. Gumurr-djararrk." Bala ḡayi yarrupthunan ḡuyalila.

Lukuraḡala ḡayi, lukuraḡala, lukuraḡala, dḡaḡaḡdḡinin marrtjin, dḡaḡaḡdḡinin, dḡaḡaḡdḡinin, ḡa yan bili ḡayi dḡawaryun waḡa, bala ḡayi liw'yunan roḡiyinan waḡalila.

ḡayiny nhāḡal Dḡeḡthuny, nhanbal ḡakuny bala yarrupthunan raḡilila. liw'yunan ḡayi, liw'yunan, liw'yunan . . . ḡa yan bili dhawaḡthun nhanbal ḡakuny. ḡayiny bukuwarrwaryunan ḡuyawun, bala ḡalkara marrtjin Dḡeḡthuny. Bala ḡayiny nhāḡal warray mālu'mirriḡuyuny, bala nhanukal ḡombuḡal warray ḡunhi ḡuyany. Bulu ḡayi ḡawatthun, ḡa ḡayiny yan ḡombuḡal ḡanya,

"Mālu ḡarra dhuwal ḡawatthun?"

"Ye-e-e-e . . . , ḡa burrwarr."

"Mālu ḡarra dhuwal ḡawatthun?"

"Ye-e-e-e-e, ḡa burrwarr."

"Mālu ḡarra dhuwal ḡawatthun?"

"Ye-e-e-e-e, ḡa burrwarr."

Bitjarr lingu, bitjarr lingu, bitjarr lingu, ḡa yan bili dhawar'yun. Bala ḡayi nāḡinin ḡunhala ḡaku'ḡura. Maḡdany yan lukan warray. Bathara maḡda marrtjin, ḡa bitjarra ḡayi nhārandja ḡurḡaḡuruny, bulun yep'nha mala.

After a while, Djert's father went fishing in a small bark canoe, and came back with it full of fish. When Djert saw the canoe coming ashore he quickly made a big fire. When the canoe was on the shore Djert ran to help his father carry the fish. He held up a fine red fish but his father saw him and took the fish from him. Again and again his father grabbed the fish from him and put the fish on the fire.



Ŋayiny ŋäthinan, ŋäthinan, ŋäthinan, yan bili bulkany marrtjin durryan, durryan, yan bili wanany marrtjin bulkamirriyan, durryan marrtjin, maŋutjiny marrtjin bilyunan, lukuny marrtjin wäyindhinan. Bala ŋayi wäyindhinan.

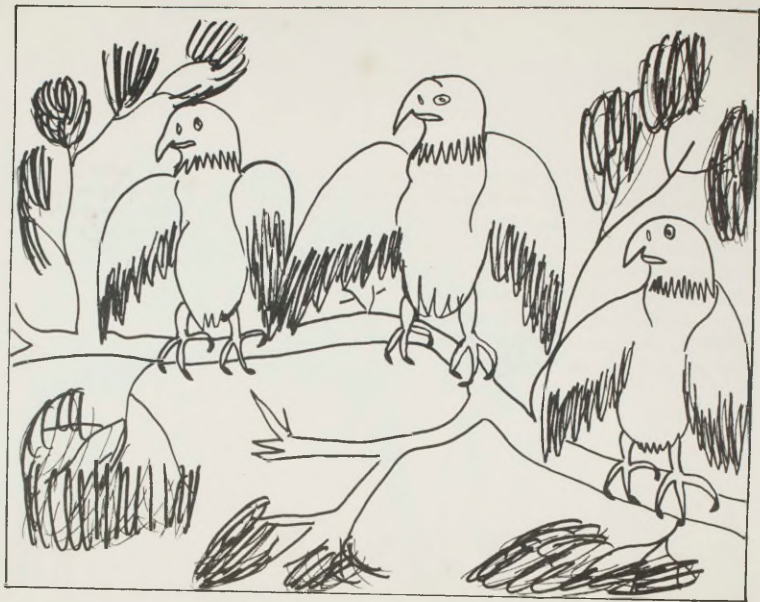
Mandany momanlukan, yakan ŋanyanhäŋal. Butthunnydja ŋayi, bala ŋal'yunan mawurraki'lila. Bala ŋayi ŋäthinan, "Djet . . , djet . . , djet . . , djet . . ," bitjarra. Ŋayi ŋäthinydja ŋunhala garrwar'nha, mawurraki'ŋura. Mandany nhäŋal ŋanya yukurran gonha'yun.

Djert started to cry in the canoe. He cried and cried until feathers began to grow on his body, his eyes turned into bird's eyes, his mouth became a beak and his arms became wings. He had turned into an eagle, and flew from the sand to the tree.



Bala mandany n̄andi`mirriṅuyuny manday n̄akula ṅanya rirrakaynha n̄athinyara, bala waṅanan. “Nhaltjan ṅunha manda ṅarrak yothunhany? N̄oy-m̄arram? . . m̄alu`mirriṅuy ḡa ṅathi`mirriṅuy? N̄ali marrtjin gul’, yarrupthunna.” N̄ayiny yānan n̄athin, “Djet̄ . . djet̄ . . djet̄ . . djet̄ . .” benwala yolkala. N̄ayiny nh̄aṅal yukurran m̄alu`mirriṅuyuny, bala buṯṯhunan. Bulu ṅayiny ṅathi`mirriṅuny bitjarr yan liṅgu gonha`yun nh̄any malan, guyany, gurthany, bathiny, w̄aṅany, buṅbuny, ga miyalknhany mandan.

*His father saw him and
he too turned into a bird.
His grandfather turned
into a bird too.*

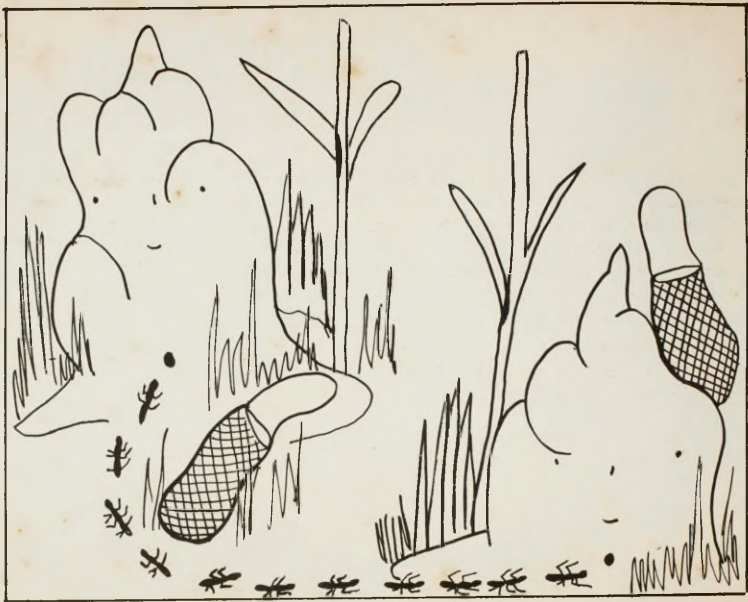


Ŋak, ŋak, ŋak, ŋak, ŋal' marrtjin mawurraki'lila. Bala walal buṯṯhunan, ŋāthinyaminan ŋulan garrwar'kurra, yurru warr-pam'nha wāyinnha walal.

“Djet . . , djet . . , djet . . , djet . . ,” bitjarra.

Mandany ṅāndi'mirriṅuny manda yarrupthundja marrtjin, nhāṅal bāyṅu warray walalany yulṅuny, yan buṅbun, guyan, ṅakun, ga gurthan. Ŋayi guyany nhāran gurthakurr ṅiw'yunmaraṅal.

They all left the fish lying on the ground. Djert's mother saw him crying in the sky and came back quickly and found only the fish, the dillybag and the canoe.



Bala manda waḡanharaminan, “Bäyḡun dhuwal yolḡu'-yulḡuny bay!”

“ḡali lukan dhuwal guyany, bala marrtjin duwaṯṯhuna dhipanawala diltjilila.” Yuwalkthi lukanan manda, lukanan, dulpuṯhinan marrtjin manda, bala marrtjinan duwaṯṯhunan. Manda marrtjinany, bala nhinandja yan gupadalnha, marrtjin gundirrthin warray.

Bala dhiyalanumin dhāwuny dhawar'yun Djet'kalaḡu-wuyny, ḡunhi ḡayi wäyindhin, ga dhuwalnha ḡunhi ḡali ḡuli nhāma ḡanya.

The two women went back to the jungle and turned into an ant bed.

This is a true dreamtime story.

This story was produced at the Literature Production Centre at Yirrkala in North-Eastern Arnhem Land. The Centre was established as part of the Department of Education's Bi-lingual Education Programme, to produce reading material in Aboriginal languages for use in the school and in Adult Education Programmes. The Aboriginal Arts Board has supported this programme at Yirrkala and at other Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, by providing funds for purchase of equipment to produce booklets, and for payments to people to record their stories. The stories are transcribed, translated and illustrated by Aboriginal people working in the programme with the help of trained linguists and teachers.

This story was told by Wakuthi Marawili, an elder of the Maḡarrpa clan, who has recently returned to his tribal lands at Banyala, some distance from Yirrkala, to set up a homeland centre. He told the story to Mrs Dundiwuy Wunungmurra, who works in the Literature Production Centre at Yirrkala. She transcribed it in Djapu, one of the languages spoken in the area and translated it into English. She is also a talented artist and her illustrations show an interesting mixture of traditional and European art styles, with their two-dimensional representation, lack of perspective, and stylised figures.

The story of Djeṭ is common to many of the tribes in Northern Australia. It is a moral tale, reiterating precepts of behaviour that were determined by the social and natural environment of the Aboriginal people. The greedy boy who would not share his catch of fish is punished. He becomes a sea-hawk, his spirit ancestor, and spends the rest of his time hunting and living alone.

Nelson



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