

Patrina Munungurr



**WARWUYUN  
GURRA  
WANGA'WU**

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Sorrow For Home

In early 2021, for reasons beyond her control, Yolŋu artist Patrina Munungurr was forced into exile from her ancestral homelands.

She still has no knowledge of when it will be safe enough for her to return.

The following writing is a transcript of the recording she made on her last phone call home.

It has been translated from her native tongue Dhuwaya into English.

All images appear courtesy of the artist.



My Name is Patrina Munungurr

My Homeland is Wandawuy

I grew up at Wandawuy  
and lived there with my family

I watched the elders and all my family

While they were painting  
and working on their artworks

I lived there until i grew up

Then I moved to Yirrkala

I started working at the art centre

I was working on film at the art centre

I was a film maker

I went around all the homelands filming  
Dhapi (initiation) Ceremonies

And funerals

I worked around the Yirrkala  
community as well

Working with my elders  
and the young people

The school kids



We would go hunting

Down to the beach we would go  
hunting for oysters

Going through the mangroves  
to get mud mussels

Just like the old people had done

We copied what they had taught us

And we are doing the same today

Taking the kids hunting

Fishing and collecting oysters

Today we are still doing it

Just like our elders did.





I was also working from home

Painting with my elder brother  
Barayuwa Mununggurr

On our mother's sacred  
Munyuku designs.

And teaching our children  
at the same time

Because we saw our elders

That's how they taught us.

We are continuing this knowledge  
for our children

For all the children

For all the family

So they know how to go hunting  
for oysters and fish

How to weave with pandanus

How to dance in ceremonies.



I have filmed three Dhapi  
(initiation) ceremonies

Two Dhuwa

Djapu Clan

One Yirritja

Mangalili Clan

Young Boy's Dhapi at Wandawuy

I film all of my families ceremonies

Dhapi ceremonies

Families dancing.







There are lots of my films  
at that place

At the art centre

I was working as a filmmaker there

I would record with the old ladies

We would work together and  
help each other

And I'm missing those days

When we would work together

And now I am far away from  
where I used to work

The art centre

I'm missing it all

My home

Mulka

And my friends and family  
who work there

While I sit here  
thinking about it all

My homeland Wandawuy

and the Yolŋu there

Thinking as I sit here

Missing all the things  
that I used to do

With the kids and the elders  
in my homeland

Taking them hunting

All my family and friends in Yirrkala

It's finished.





Now I am speaking  
And recording myself  
And my words  
Through the telephone  
Because I have been gone a long time  
From my home  
My work  
My people  
I'm missing it all  
My work  
My people.



Now I'm sitting here in Darwin

And it doesn't feel the same

It is different living in Darwin

Without law, without culture

Without my work

Without seeing family nearby

Living far away

My family is back where I used to live

Wandawuy

And Yirrkala

And I am living here

As I watch and hear the sounds  
of the winds and the birds

I am thinking

My mind returns to the place from which I fled

My home is there  
It's name is Wandawuy.



And now I am in a foreign land  
My life has changed here  
I'm forgetting about my law and  
all my peoples culture  
I don't go hunting  
I don't see dancing  
Missing seeing Dhapi ceremonies.  
and dancing at funerals  
and hunting or fishing  
Eating oysters.  
Eating fish and turtle

It's different here.

Not like the place i left behind

Which holds so many stories and power

Which holds great strength and feelings  
for my people.

Here it feels different

But if i could return home

I could feel strong and connected to the land.

I am living far far away in Darwin

But my heart aches for my land.

And my mind goes back to my home

My people,

My heart,

My feelings.





