

# Poetry As a Bridge

**"To have lost you, my language, is my greatest shame."**

So reads a line from one of Mary Duroux's poems. Yet the author has found in poetry another language that may not be the "sweet sounding dialect of Dyrirringan", but which certainly shows an unusual eloquence and force of its own, as the poems on these pages reveal.

Although for many years Mary Duroux of Kempsey has been a persuasive advocate for her people, it has only been in the past year or so that her voice has been heard in writing and poems.

It has been a fertile and rewarding period. She has a song on record called "Outcast Halfcaste" sung by Mick and Aileen Donovan of Eungai. Four more of her songs are soon to be released.

"Tatiana", one of her poems, was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in April and will soon be reprinted in a school textbook, an ironical but informative fact considering that its author never had a high school education.

Like much of her work "Tatiana" recalls a previous era and deals with the meeting of the black and white cultures. Her claim that she writes by impulse is verified by the spontaneity of the verse and the strength of the emotion behind it. Her poems are not the work of a propagandist or politician. This is not to suggest they are not persuasive or moving. Indeed this is their strength, that these elegies to another era come from a poetess whose vision is rooted in the present and its harsh realities.



*Mary Duroux*

Mary Duroux is a teacher in that she wants to "Explain the ways of the dark people and how they once lived and thought".

"I think every Aboriginal child should be taught something about his origin, the tribal life and lore surrounding it. If we lose this we lose everything," she argues.

She also believes the legends of her people could form a bridge between the two cultures. Certainly her poetry offers such a bridge.