

The following poem is titled **The Soul of the Anzac**  
and was written by **Roderic Quinn**

The form that was mine was brown and hard,  
And thewed and muscled, and tall and straight;  
And often it rode from the station yard,  
And often it passed through the stockyard gate;  
And often it paused on the grey skyline  
'Twixt mulga and mallee or gum and pine.

There was never a task that it would not do;  
There was never a labour it left undone;  
But ever and always it battled through,  
And took the rest that its toil had won,  
And slept the sleep of the weary-limbed  
Till the stars grew pale and the planets dimmed.

The form that was mine is mine no more,  
For low it lies in a soldier's grave  
By an alien sea on an alien shore;  
And over its sleep no wattles wave,  
And stars unseen on their journey creep;  
But it wakes no more from its dreamless sleep.

O Mother of mine, what is is best!  
And our graves are dug at the hour of birth;  
And the form that slept on your shielding breast  
Sleeps soundly here in the mothering earth.  
And dust to dust! When our part is played,  
Does it matter much where the change is made?

O Heart that was mine, you were brave and strong—  
How strong, how brave, let another tell!  
You loved the lilt of the bushman's song,  
And loved the land that he loved so well,  
And loved—ah, well!—as well she knew,  
The sweet, white girl who was all to you.

O Heart of mine, though your love was great,  
Yet a greater than Love is lord of man;  
The rose-path wound to the garden gate,  
And there the track to The Peaks began;  
And though storm threatened and skies grew black,  
You dared the menace and took the track.

O Heart, when the cliffs were hard to climb,  
How sweet was home, and her eyes how sweet!  
How sweet the moments when Love kept time,  
And you and her heart gave beat for beat,  
And the waters sang, and the sun-rays glanced,  
And the flowers laughed out, and the saplings danced.

Yet better, O Heart, to do as you did  
Than to lie on her breast, as your love-gift lies;  
For how can Love prosper when Honour lies hid,  
Ashamed to look Love fair and square in the eyes?  
Though grave-mould be round you, grey grasses above,  
You live, and shall live, evermore in her love!

O Man that I was, you were foe to Death;  
For Life was fair to you—wonderful, rare;  
You had your being and drew your breath  
In ample spaces of earth and air;  
While ever and always, by night and day,  
Bright Promise pointed the Golden Way.

And yet 'twas your choice to be this thing—  
A young man dead on an alien shore,  
Where the immemorial surges sing  
As once they sang in the days of yore,  
When Greek and Trojan matched their might  
And Troy shone down upon the fight.

O Man that I was, well done! Well done!  
You chose the nobler, the better part;  
Though a mother weep for her soldier son,  
And a fair, sweet girl be sad at heart,  
Yet the soul of your country glows with pride  
At the deed you did and the death you died!