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Ron Okely

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The Turtles on Munda Beach *by Ron Okely*

It's eerie out here at night in November
 on Munda Beach
The full moon lights a highway across the reef
A huge head emerges with a body to match
 silhouetted on the sky line

She's come more than a hundred miles
 to this place each year
effortlessly this graceful giant glides down the moonbeam
 over the reef to the beach
when the ocean no longer bears her massive weight
 she begins her yearly marathon

Slowly now – tedious ungainly steps
 Flip – flop heave
 Flip – flop heave
 Flip – flop heave
nothing will stay her from her self appointed task

High and dry on the beach safe from the tide
 she rests from her labour
 are these tears streaming down her aged face
with her rear flipper she scoops a hole big enough
 to hold a small child
settling she lays her clutch of shell-less eggs
 Plop plop plop plop plop plop
her massive flipper pushes back the sand
 then cleverly camouflages the spot

She starts her long slow laboring return to the sea
Embraced at last by the welcoming arms of the ocean
she disappears up the moonbeam as silently as she came
to places far away from Mundabullangana Station

Comes the wet the hatchlings will
 hurry scurry
 helter skelter
to the sea
Only a few will escape the predatory sea gulls
but those who do will return one day to this place
 as strong as the mother who gave them life

C'EST LA VIE !!
 SUCH IS LIFE !!

Ron, born in Bassendean in 1929, developed a childhood love of the river. Married in 1954, Ron lived with his wife and family in regional towns including Lake Grace and Port Hedland before moving to Maddington in 1971. His poems reflect his appreciation of family and friends, his experiences in country WA and as a Social Worker in the Emergency Centre of Royal Perth Hospital.