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## The Turtles on Munda Beach

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 !!

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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.