

## BLACK MIST

1980. I read a report in the Adelaide "Advertiser" of the story of Yami Lester, who grew up in Maralinga, the area used by the British in the 1950's to test nuclear bombs. His and other's persistence finally resulted in a Royal Commission into the matter, but there's a good deal still unresolved. Yami became blind, a fact he attributes to his childhood experience. He now lives in Alice Springs, and works as the Chairman of the Central Lands Council ( I think!). The story stands on its own, but is also a powerful picture of the pervasive nature of evil.

Mamu, mamu, get away from here,  
listen what we say.  
Devil spirit, get away from here,  
go some other way.  
Cold wind, blowing in the early morn,  
blow this thing away.  
Black mist rolling, black mist rolling,  
black mist rolling across the land.

It's still coming, creeping over the earth:  
"All you kids, get under cover!  
Here's a hole for you, now close your eyes."  
But we felt it as it passed over –  
cold and silent with an evil breath,  
deadly blackened breeze. Black Mist ...

Next day we were sicker than dogs.  
Nobody felt like moving.  
Our eyes were red and sore as hell,  
and nothing any good for soothing.  
No-one fit enough to hunt for food,  
so hunger came in too. Black Mist ...

Then the old people started to die –  
I don't remember how many!  
We were young, we weren't allowed to see,  
but I reckon there was nearly twenty.  
That cloud was terrible, it smelt so bad,  
my eyes never did get well. Black Mist ...

They say, wherever that black cloud went,  
the trees and the plants were dying.  
And though some people did survive,  
there was a lot like me got blinded.  
They say it wouldn't ever happen again.  
Well, I say just take a look around. Black Mist ...