

YOU WERE IN THIS PLACE

1987. An Australia Day service is organised each year in the city of Adelaide. For the 200th anniversary of white settlement, repentance was as much in mind as celebration. The story of Jacob's dream at Bethel (the original stairway to heaven!) was central in the service. This song rose out of that story, and especially from Jacob's statement when he wakes up from his dream: "God is in this place, and I didn't know it!"

1. At the dawn of the ages
you pulled land from the sea.
With your word you invented
all we know, all we see:
creek and desert and forest,
red and grey kangaroo.
You were in this place—
but we never knew.

2. Paintings seen on the rock face,
footprints left in the sand,
campfire next to the river,
songs that rise from the land:
signs that seem so elusive,
shadows just out of view.
You were in this place—
but we never knew.

3. Do we take after Jacob,
blind to what lies at hand,
needing dreams to inform us
God is here in this land?
See him suffering and dying,
bread and wine tell the news.
You were in this place—
but we never knew.

4. Jesus, open our senses,
help us see you today
in the person beside us,
as we work, as we play.
While we love you and serve you,
may it never be true:
you were in this place—
but we never knew.

Words and music: Robin Mann © 1987