



## Cultural Tapestry Arts Lesson: Midnight Oil

### ***Beds are Burning***

Out where the river broke,  
The bloodwood and the desert oak -  
Holden wrecks and boiling diesels  
Steam in forty-five degrees

The time has come to say fair's fair -  
To pay the rent, to pay our share  
The time has come, a fact's a fact.  
It belongs to them - Let's give it back!

How can we dance when our earth is turning?  
How do we sleep while our beds are burning?

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Four wheels scare the cockatoos  
From Kintore East to Yuendumu.  
The western desert lives and breathes  
In forty-five degrees.

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**Lyrics & Music: Rob Hirst, Jim Moggie, Peter Garrett (1987)** - Midnight Oil was an Australian rock band that frequently recorded songs exploring environmental protection and social justice themes, particularly the issue of aboriginal rights for Australia's indigenous people. Peter Garrett, who wrote these lyrics, became the country's Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, and later was named Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth.

Official video by Midnight Oil - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejorQVY3m8E>

**NOTES:**

# Let's Explore

Spend several minutes to read the lyrics a few times...

- *What do you notice?*

- *Who or what is the subject(s) and why was the writer inspired to write about them?*
- *What do you learn about the subject - where might this be taking place, and when?*
- *What makes this subject different or special?*

- *What do you wonder?*

- *What is going on? What surrounds the subject of the song?*
- *What happened before the time of the song, and what might come next?*
- *Are there different ways to see the situation, or is it clear what is happening?*
- *Have you ever seen someone or something like the subject? If you have, where did you see them or it?*

- *How does it make you feel?*

- *If the song describes an action, would you ever like to do something similar?*
- *Do you see yourself in the song? In what way?*
- *Do things or feelings in the song remind you of anything?*
- *Does the title of the song affect how you feel about it?*

Write down your thoughts and share with family and friends...

# The Four Artistic Processes



## RESPOND: Explore and Understand

- What words have impact? Why do you think the author chose them?
- What do you notice about tone, rhythm, pattern and mood of the song?

## CONNECT: Relate to the artwork

- How does the song make you feel? Why?
- If you could interview the author or the subject, what questions would you ask?
- What do you think the subject (person) in the song is doing? If there isn't a person, do you feel an emotion in what is written, such as affection, tension, or creativity?

## CREATE: Make your own art

- Write a poem or short essay reflecting on the way the song makes you feel, or a subject similar to that of the song.
- Draw or paint an artwork or take a photograph that has a subject similar to that in the song.
- Imagine you are the artist who created the song. Write what they might say to describe their reason for writing the song, from their point of view.

## PRESENT: Share your artwork

- Share your creation with family or friends.
- Take a moment to share what you have discovered.