

Reflections 4 - Kata Tjuta Sunrise...

There was an old woman
Who swallowed a fly
And I **KNOW** why
She swallowed a fly...
She was puffing
Up a steep, rocky slope!



Awake
before I should be,
but sunrise at
Kata Tjuta awaits.
I watch the road
carefully in the dark
for roos and camels..
Thankfully
they slept in
(or went to bed early??)
Uluru was backlit
By the sunlight
waking up...
Kata Tjuta had
the pink and blue glow
from Uluru's sunset...
Bit by bit
they came alive
with the new day.



Valley of the Winds
waits windily

around the corner...
And windy it is,
the wind howling between
the domes
but it blows the flies
away!

I did the first Lookout
the other day
so I know I'm okay
until that is passed
but the remaining 6.3 kms
the guide book says
is 'challenging!'
"I can always turn back..."
But I don't!
I take my time,
drink and rest frequently
soaking up the surroundings.
I'm glad I'm alone
for when the groups pass,
chatting away,
the wildlife disappears
and there's a lot around
this morning.

The 'up' slopes
are taken in bits -
I have to soak it all up.
I watch my footing
going down
for the rocks are loose
and slippery.



Going down from
up there...
Karingana
(lookout 2)



The valley is superb.
 There are creeks
 and trees
 and grasses
 and birds chirping,
 hidden in the bushes
 which are thick
 and green
 and full of life.
 All around
 the domes
 stand watch..
 tall and strong.
 The setting moon
 watches too
 until I have completed
 the circuit.
 I keep my eyes peeled
 for surprises
 and am rewarded often
 as insects, plants
 and birds
 flit around in the wind
 and early morning
 sunshine.



Moon half way around and almost at the end.



I wander through
 the valley
 entranced by all
 that is around me.
 The bluest of blue skies
 the rocks, trees and
 other plants...
 then, as I am walking
 quietly along, alone
 I hear what's become
 a familiar
 but elusive chirp...
 and there
 on the ground behind me
 are several zebra finches
 pecking at the mineral
 rich soil.
 They flit away
 when a noisy walking group
 approach,
 returning swiftly
 when the group's gone.
 I stand, statue like, as they are untroubled by me.
 It's hard though to see them on the camera screen
 so I point and hope!



3 in this one
 6 here (I think!)



I rest
in a shaded valley
'breathing in'
all that is around me
yet again.



Later there is
another creek
with more beautiful
eucalypts

Sucking up this season's
abundant water.

All around the valley
the domes of Kata Tjuta
stand tall,
and this is the side



you don't see from
the road!

The end is nigh
and I am pleased
with what I've seen
and myself!

I ask if a couple
would like their photo
taken together



and, for the first time,
in broad Irish brogue,
"And I'll be takin one of you!"
So here's what I look
like when I've nearly
finished....

only one more steep hill to climb
then amble back to
the carpark,
mostly downhill!

I have walked
all that way
through such
a diversity of environments
and when I go
to the campground 'ladies',
a lungkata
(centralian blue-tongue lizard)
is smiling at me
from under the washing machine!



The Liru walk beckons
With an indigenous guide
Sarah,
along with an interpreter...
We start at the "Touch Wall"
in the Cultural Centre
with the story of
Liru and Kuniya
the snakes who are part



of the creation story.

We move from sand-dune country (tali) to open woodland (wanari) dominated by mulga scrub with bloodwoods dotted here and there.

The seeds heads of these clumps of grass, are used to make a kind of bread after a lot of work!

Sarah spies a snake skin from Liru (western brown snake) shed when it grew...

The fire is lit in the shelter and we learn how spears are made from mulga saplings then worked until they're straight in the fire's warmth...

Then dried bush is threshed with a digging stick on modern day termite mounds (canvas)...

The powder that results is added to the resin ball



after it's been warmed in the flames and used as glue in making throwing sticks and spears.

Sarah shows us how the punu (?) (known elsewhere as coolamon) a multi-purpose woman's tool is balanced on the head to free the hands for other things. (Most had a turn! Jo from Mozambique Offered to take photo!!!)

The punu is made from the bloodwood.

Sarah showed us a scarred tree from long ago.

We had a turn at spear throwing too, Using the 'toys' that grandfathers made for grandsons so they could play and learn how to be grown up!

The pistol grip practised first...

Going, going, gone.....

And all with the backdrop of Uluru.

Deeeeep breath!



The base walk awaits,
all 10.6 kms of it!
(11.6 if you count
two trips to the toilet
250 metres away!)
I start out at sunrise.
The peace and quiet
is sublime,
though soon I realise
that the surroundings
here
are not as entrancing
as those of
Valley of the Winds.
"The Rock" though
is fantastic...
The variations
in markings,
colour,
texture
height
indentations
and spirit
are many.
But it is not until
I turn for 'home'
that I hear many
birds.
As I head west
the bloodwoods appear..
appear

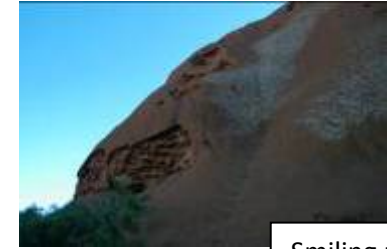


Uluru's "kidney"

interspersed with
patches of grassland.
I look for a match
of blackish algae on the rock,
which indicates water has flowed.
There doesn't seem
to be a correlation.
The rock is varied...
some smooth,
some concertina like,
some honeycombed
I feel irreverent
as I 'name' sections of rock -
but the names
spring to mind
uninvited
as I approach.
The zebra finches
scratch for minerals
here as well.
"What the.....?"
and up close
a caterpillar 'train'
crosses the path.
A sense of satisfaction
because I've walked the base,
but not the sense of wonder
from Valley of the Winds.
Kings canyon awaits so it's....au revoir.



The 'happy' whale...
complete with baleen (teeth)



Smiling monkey

