

A Poem by Michele Fermanis-Winward

Thistledown

An icy path with sharp frost ache
is how I see my forebear's life
on a wind-shorn Tiree farm.

Her daily bread of kith and lore,
the cotter's measured day
to till and mend and spin.

The depth of grief she stood
to leave her motherland
despite a chance at wealth.

Thistle seeds were talismans
she buried in a hostile soil,
they thrived and quickly spread.

Dry scrub aped Scottish field,
she gazed out on purple blooms
and pined for lost Tiree.

Michele is a descendant of Charles Maclean and Mary McKinnon from Scarinish, Tiree, who emigrated with their children to Australia in 1837/38 on the Brilliant and settled near Newcastle, New South Wales.