

**CLAIM TO THE COUNTRY**  
**An anthem\***

I am the land: of the early times  
 I am the time: of the blackest night  
 I am the sound: of the distant rain  
 I am the spring: that never dries  
 I am the scent: of the sho-/oa root  
 I am a star: in the water pit  
 I am /xue: who is all things  
     I am the dying Moon. Who but I  
     Walks the sky at dusk?

I am the dream: whose house is little  
 I am the legs: of !khwa  
 I am the Sun: tossed in the sky  
 I am the sound: of the falling star  
 I am the clouds: unequaled in beauty  
 I am the honey: of the eland  
 I am the Moon: who comforts the orphaned child  
     I am the fire's child. Who but I  
     Dispels the darkness?

*I have been the whisper of every desire*  
*I have been the healer of every sickness*  
*I have been the hope of every hunger*  
*I have been the fear of every night*  
*I have been the rumour of every danger*

I am the snake: on the grave  
 I am the fly: who listens and tells  
 I am the tick: on the sheep's back  
 I am the shadow: of the lion  
 I am a baboon: whose death lives on your brow  
 I am the back-apron: of a mouse's skin  
 I am the animal: before there were animals  
     I am the son of the wind. Who but I  
     Changes from man to a bird?

I am the wings: of a dreaming Mantis  
 I am the song: of the beast of prey  
 I am the tobacco-pouch: stolen by a dog  
 I am a stripe: on the springbuck's side  
 I am the horn; on the antelope's head  
 I am the dancing rattle; of springbuck ears

I am the spoor: of the eland  
 I am the waterhole. Who but I  
 Passes from father to son?

*I have been the arrow for every bow  
 I have been the stone for every stick  
 I have been the shelter from every he-rain  
 I have been the fire for every camp  
 I have been the fat of every feast*

I am a dancer in the moonlight  
 I am the lash of the European  
 I am the lord of the desert lands  
 I am the breath of the spoiled lung  
 I am the tear in the firelight  
 I am the hope of my engagement  
 I am the song of the broken string  
 I am the gun. Who but I  
 Takes care of an old man in the middle of the cold?

I am the names: that are no longer known  
 I am the prisoner: at the Breakwater  
 I am the book: in which my story is written  
 I am the hunter: calling for rain  
 I am the owl-spirit: of my pupil Wilhelm  
 I am the teacher: of my language /xam  
 I am the healer: of sickness  
 I am a magician. Who but I  
 Throws stories to the wind?

*I have been the wind of every soul  
 I have been the strings of every thought  
 I have been the murmur of every wind  
 I have been the end of every hope  
 I have been the place of every memory.*

**\* After Robert Graves's restoration of the *Song of Amergin***

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