

POEMS FOR A LAZY DAY

By Jimmy Brook

A collection of twenty poems that should help to pass a lazy day. Some are just good fun and others are insightful or reflective of places and personalities. I had pleasure in writing them, so I hope you may also enjoy them.

I grew up and still live on the eastern coast of Australia, so a little bit of that land and it's culture, may have crept in. A note or two at the end of a poem, has been added to explain a word or expression. The order of presentation is purely random.

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THE BIRD ON THE MOUNTAIN

SOMETIMES YOU MAY NEVER NOTICE IT
AND OTHER TIMES IT IS ALWAYS THERE
IT'S PART OF THE MOUNTAIN MAJESTY
THAT PARTICULAR CALL COMING ON THE CRISP AIR

IT WAS DOWN ON THE PATTERSON RIVER
THAT THE LAST TIME I RECALL IT'S SOUND
WE'D STOPPED TO FILL OUR BOTTLES
WHEN THE LILTING CALL WAS FOUND

IT WAS ONLY FAINT AND SHORT THEN
WE SCARCELY GAVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT
BUT AS WE ROUNDED CARRABOLLA'S GRASSY SIDE
IT WAS REPEATED LIKE A PLAINTIFF CRY CUT SHORT

OUR THOUGHTS WERE CAUGHT UP IN THE RAINFOREST
THE BIG LEAVES AND VINES ENTWINING
THE SCURRY OF A SCRUB TURKEY WOULD TURN OUR HEAD
OR THE WAVERING ODOUR OF PERFUMES UNDEFINING

AS WE LAY AROUND THE FIRE THAT NIGHT
WITH THOUGHTS OF THE CLIMB AHEAD

IT CAME SO LOUD AND CLEAR
THAT MINDS STOPPED IN TRACK AND VOICES SHED

WE LABOURED UP THE MOUNT ROYAL RANGE
THE VALLEY MISTS SCARECELY HAD LIFTED
THE BRUSHBOXES AND MOUNTAIN ASHES
WERE MAJESTIC SENTINALS THAT NEVER SHIFTED

IT'S CALL WAS NOW MORE OFTEN
IT'S CLARITY UNHEARD OF IN OUR MEMORIES
WAS IT A SERENADE, A SOLILOQUY OR A SONATA?
IT BLENDED WITH THE LOFTY AIRIES

THE LAWYER VINE CLUNG AND GRABBED US
THE FALLEN LEAVES MUFFLED OUR TREAD
THE GRASS TUSsockS AMONG THE TREES
WERE SOFT TO US AS ON LUNCH WE FED

NO CALL CAME TO US AT REPAST
WE WONDERED AND CALCULATED ITS FATE
AND AS CAREYS PEAK LOOMED INTO VIEW
IT SEEMED WE AND THE BUSH HAD LOST A MATE

THAT EVENING ON BARRINGTON'S ALPINE MEADOWS
WE WERE SILENT AND ALL FELT A LOSS
NO TALKING THAT NIGHT AROUND WARM FLAMES
OUR MINDS WERE ELSEWHERE, COLD LIKE MOSS

THE RISING SUN TIPPED THE GUMS WITH GOLD
THEN IN ALL ITS GLORY IT LIT THE LEAVES
AND WITH IT, UPON US LIKE THE WIND
THE MORNING CHORUS ROLLED IN LIKE THE SEAS

IT'S SONG WAS JOY, IT'S SONG WAS A WELCOME
IT LIFTED OUR HEARTS, OUR HAPPINESS GUSHED LIKE A FOUNTAIN
IT WAS A SINGLE SYMPHONY ON TOP OF THE WORLD
IT WAS- IT WAS THE BIRD ON THE MOUNTAIN

Jimmy Brook

[This poem is inspired by visits to the Barrington Tops area north of Sydney. Carrabolla is one of those scrubby peaks that walkers love. Leeches excluded.]

STRAWBERRIES

With time on my hands, and some land out the back
I told my dear wife I'd save money to keep in the black

We'd always loved strawberries, that wonderful red delight
So I would put in some rows, and Mavis would smile at the sight

Then soon they were planted, and with straw all around
They quickly grew up and it looked really grand

Then dismay and despair, the flowers were few
And nothing bore fruit that I longed soon to chew

I turned to my mate one day at the pub
And asked his advice, he was in the garden club

He whispered his secret and home to my plot
I did as he told me and dreamed of eating the lot

My wife just yelled and began to scream
"You're supposed to use manure and not flaming whip cream"

Jimmy Brook

THE COCKY

THE COCKATOO IS A NOISY CREATURE
IT SCREECHES AND EATS LIKE IT'S NEVER BEEN FED

AND NOT CONTENT WITH NUTS AND GRASS SEEDS
EATS THE ROOF AND THE HAIR OFF YOUR HEAD

WHILST OTHER BIRDS MOVE QUICKLY AWAY
LEAVING US LOOKING AT A MASS OF WHITE FOAM

A SOLITARY EAGLE HAS SECOND THOUGHTS
THE PROMISING MEAL JUST TASTES LIKE A STONE

SO THE MORAL OF THIS BIRDS STRANGE EXISTENCE
IS YET TO BE GLEANED AND WONDER

WE WILL FOREVER AND EVER BE NOISELLY ASSAILED
AND JUST WISELY, DUCK FOR COVER.

Jimmy Brook

[A cocky is a larger type bird and the white ones with sulphur crests, congregate together in large numbers. They are noisy and messy, but a pleasure to watch.]

ANGEL OF NATURE

MY GREAT GRANDFATHER HAD LEFT US A FRIGHTENING TALE
AS A STORY FOR US YOUNG CHILDREN, IT WOULD NEVER FAIL

THAT BOYS MY AGE NEVER DOUBTED MUM'S RETELLING
THAT YOU HALF TAKE IN WHILST YOUR BABY BROTHER IS YELLING

I MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN IT NOW, BUT SOMEWHERE THERE WAS A MEMORY
THAT SURFACED IN DREAMS AS I LAY THERE IN MY REVERY

FOR SOME YEARS LATER IT CAME TO ME LOUD AND VERY CLEAR
LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTENING THAT GIVES YOU A TERRIBLE FEAR

WHILST CRAWLING AIMLESLY ON MT.WARRABY'S WILD SIDE LIKE A GRUB
I STUMBLED INTO A SMALL GULLY AND THERE POKING UP THROUGH THE
SCRUB

WITH BANDED SLENDER TRUNKS AND A CROWN WITH SPRAY LIKE GREEN
GRASS
AND BUNCHES OF FRUIT ALL HANGING AND SHINING LIKE BITS OF YELLOW
BRASS

THERE WERE THREE OR FOUR TALL PALM TREES THE LIKES I HAD NEVER SEEN
THEY STRUCK AWE AND WONDER IN ME, IN THIS WORLD OF OLIVE GREEN

SO LOST IN MY ABSORPTION OF THIS NOVELTY AMONGST THE GUMS
AND WITH THE LITTLE BIRDS DARTING AS THEY SEARCHED FOR BUSH PLUMS

THAT I FAILED AT FIRST TO HEED THE DANGER THAT WAS LURKING CLOSE TO
ME
SO ENGROSED IN THESE ODDITIES, THAT I JUST FAILED TO SEE

A GRUNT SHOOK MY REVERIE ASIDE, AND I TURNED MY FACE WANTING TO
CRY
A BLACK AND ANGRY BOAR WAS ABOUT TO RUSH ME, AND I KNEW THAT I
WOULD DIE

A STEP BACK AND A ROOT ENDED, ANY CHANCE OF ESCAPING THE DEMON I
SAW

I FELL ON MY BACK AND THAT WILD PIG WOULD SOON HAVE ME IN ITS JAW

DEATH MAY HAVE COME TO ME THEN AND I HAD ONLY MANAGED TWELVE YEARS

BUT THERE WAS AN ANGEL HOVERING ABOVE, AND IT CAME AS I GUSHED OUT THE TEARS

A BIG AND OLD DEAD FROND WITH NUTS AGED WITH DECAY JUST THEN SILENTLY CHOSE THIS TIME, TO LEAVE ITS HOME OF MANY A DAY

AND QUICKLY CLOUTED THE DEVIL INCARNATE AS IT STARTED ON ITS MOVE I SAW IT ENVELOPE THE BOAR, AND ITS IMPACT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SMOOTH

THIS UNERVED THE ANIMAL AND IT TWISTED SIDEWAYS IN CONFUSION WITH DEAD PALM FRONDS COVERING ITS EYES, IT WAS DISTRACTED BY THE BRANCHE'S INTRUSION

TURNING AND THEN BOLTING TO A THICKET AND NOT STOPPING I JUST LAY THERE SHAKING AND WONDERING, WHAT NEXT LIFE WOULD BRING

PALE AND MUCH OUT OF BREATH, DID OUR VERANDAH I REACH COLLAPSING INTO THE CHAIR AND CLINGING TO IT LIKE A LEECH

I FLICKED THROUGH THE PAGES OF DADS BIG TREE BOOK SO FAST AND THERE I FOUND IT, A STATELY TREE JUST BUILT TO LAST

THEY WERE CALLED BANGALOW PALMS AND HERE WAS THEIR SOUTHERN LINE WITH AN EXPLODING CANOPY OF GREEN VERDENT WONDER EVER SO FINE

LONG SLENDER TRUNKS WITH BLACK RINGS SO PRECISE THAT I KNEW THAT THEY WOULD ALWAYS PROTECT ME, FROM DINGOES AND EVEN MICE

THEY ARE MY HEROES FOR LIFE AND I FEEL SAFE WHEN STANDING UNDER NATURE IS SOMETHING TO RESPECT AND ALWAYS ABOUNDS WITH WONDER

A GIANT GUARDIAN OF THE FOREST AND OF LUCKY PEOPLE LIKE ME BANGALOW PALMS ARE MY LIFE AND MY TREE

Jimmy Brook

[Bangalow palms are graceful and stately temperate forest palms that grow quite tall. Bangalow is a nice town in northern New South Wales, and the palms have grown naturally, over large areas of the state. I did come face to face with a black pig on a solo walk, but it was more frightened of me than I was of him.]

THE LITTLE BLACK DOG

The clouds were a massing, and thunder rumbled a tune
Old Jack gathered the washing in, and none too soon
The first splats of rain rattled on the tin
He stared through the window, and listened to the din

It lasted for an hour, or so it seemed
And when it had gone, the earth smelled sweet and all cleaned
Then he saw the little black dog, dripping all wet
Shivering under the bushes, with wide eyes, starting to fret

Jack opened the door, and waited with eyes kindly knit
But it just shivered and cowered, and shrank back a bit
So it was by need, to go out and offer a hand
And finally to lead it inside, to sit on dry land

It nuzzled his calloused fingers, and licked on his nail
So Jack offered some cold meat, and it wagged its short tail
With a fire now lit, and cosy warmth slowly spreading
It curled up next to Jack's feet, and started snoring

That was some months ago, and he has never left Jack's side
Even down to the local shop, it follows in his stride
Its origin is a mystery, but we should never wonder
For to seek may find no answers, with this child of the thunder

Old Jack smiles at the joy, now in his happy life
And thinks that it is some heavenly present, from his late wife

The house resounds to the barking, and to the patter of little feet
And each day is a new experience, happily, that both man and his friend meet

And when a storm comes a calling, it's with kind thoughts that both look at the
rain

Then nuzzle each other, and realise their life no longer should feel any pain.
The fun time walks are pleasant times, as along the road they jog
One purpose filled man, and one equally happy, little black dog

Jimmy Brook

OUR DOG

I HAVE TO TELL YOU OF OUR LITTLE DOG
WE SORT OF GOT HIM WHEN DOWN IN THE CITY
HE LATCHED ON TO US AND ENDED UP HOME
A REDDISH PALE COLOUR SO WE CALLED HIM PINKY

THERE WERE HOLES IN THE FRONT YARD AND ALL OVER THE PLACE
AND HIS BONES ENDED UP UNDER OUR BED
BUT MY MISSUS WAS LOVING HIM JUST TO DEATH
AND WOULD YOU KNOW IT, SHE STARTED CALLING HIM RED

HIS BARKING WAS LOUD AND CARRIED AFAR
AND SOON NEXT DOOR COMPLAINED TO NAME A FEW
BUT MY LOVELY WIFE WAS DEAF TO THE WORLD AT LARGE
AND DECIDED HE NOW BE KNOWN AS BLUE

THE POOR DOG WAS NOW GETTING A NAME COMPLEX
AND STARTED HIDING IN THE SHED OR DOWN IN THE CELLAR
BUT THE DAY DOWN THERE HE UPENDED MY DAFFODIL PAINT
I DECIDED HIS NAME FROM NOW ON WOULD BE YELLA

WHEN MY COUSIN FREIDA CAME TO VISIT US
AND BROUGHT HER YOUNG DAUGHTER SHE CALLED JACKIE

YOU GUESSED IT, SHE WAS NOT EVEN OUT THE FRONT GATE
AND OUR CANINE NEMISES NOW GOT REFERRED TO AS BLACKIE

NOW OUR POOR CONFUSED LITTLE DOG
WAS MENTALLY CHALLENGED JUST SO YOU SHOULD KNOW
SO I TOOK A LOOK IN THE KIDS FAIRY TALE BOOK
AND SOLVED IT ALL BY CALLING HIM RAINBOW

Jimmy Brook

BOMBAY BERTHA

Now if you have a kindness for an animal or two
I can relate to you the good info on a person of standing
She lived at the edge of town, just go left at the big grey gum
And across the dry creek bed the old track keeps meandering

The farm is a mess with sheds hardly upright
And the smell tantalises your breath when you stop moving
The noise is a cacophony of grunts and high shrieks
One treads most carefully, or the droppings start clinging

A donkey nuzzles your back, obviously with food on its mind
And chooks and ducks start squawking and mill about your feet
Pigs set up a grunting that would drown out the town band
Whilst next to the duck pond it's finally Bertha you do meet

A woman weathered dark to make you look twice
She came from India, so Bombay came to people's lips
The shadow of a man who seemed to trail behind
One day got kicked out, and left for overseas on one of the big ships

She replaced him with more furry and feathered friends
Not counting the cockatoos and lorikeets that ate her avian delight

When offered a black tea in the kitchen you share a seat with white mice
If they haven't been eaten by a mangy cat in a one sided fight

Once I asked for milk and was told to look in the freezer
Saw a couple of cold rabbits who didn't look too good
So I passed on this option and stayed with just tea
And made my excuses as a carpet snake came out of the firewood

My feet squished and squashed and were covered by runny khaki
And no amount of cleaning seemed to do the trick
I now just wave and move quickly along, the thought of drinking black tea
makes me a bit sick

So now I live on the South Coast and go beach fishing and like being a wind
surfer
But thoughts sometimes return of my life in that town
Like turning left at the big grey gum and coming face to face with Bombay
Bertha

Jimmy Brook

A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE

A GROUP OF FRIENDS SAILED FORTH ONE DAY,
FACING THE UNKNOWN AND WITH LOADS OF LUGGAGE FOR THE TRIP
WITH CAMERAS READY AND WALLETS BULGING
THEY BRAVED THE SWELL AND THE WINDS THAT HAD QUITE A NIP

THE SHIP MAYBE A BOAT AND THE BOAT MAYBE A SHIP,
SOME COULD NOT AGREE
IT DID NOT MATTER TO ANY AS LONG AS THEY RELAXED
WITH AN ICED BEER OR TEA

THE WAVES WERE HIGH, THE VESSEL PITCHED AND ROLLED
MILFORD SOUND WAS JUST TOO ELUSIVE FOR THE LIKES OF US

SOON THE SLOPING HILLS OF PORT CHALMERS GRACED OUR EYES
WE ALL WERE EAGER TO SLIP ASHORE AND GET INTO THAT BUS

SOME RODE THE TAIREI TRAIN AND OTHERS WANDERED
AS LOCALS SMILED AND TRIED TO IMPRESS
THE SHOPS WERE SCoured AND THERE WAS TALK OF THE WEATHER
THE WORRIES OF WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE, BECOMING LESS

THE DELIGHT TO MANY WAS THE NESTLING VILLAGE OF AKAROA
WITH QUAIN T SHOPS AND BUILDINGS, IT WAS A MIND BENDER
THE FOOD WITH ITS FRENCH INFLUENCE AND THE TRIM PAINTED HOUSES
HELPED TO LESSEN THE BUMPY RIDE ON THE SHIPS TENDER

THEN ON TO PLACES, JUST SO MANY TO EXPLORE
MOUNTAINS TO CLIMB OR TOWERS TO GAZE FROM IN WONDER
THE MAORI CULTURE WAS ABSORBING AND NOURISHMENT TO THE MIND
AND AS ALWAYS THE FOOD ON BOARD WOULD TEAR OUR DIETS ASUNDER

ENTERTAINMENT WAS NEVER LACKING
WITH BINGO AND FINE WINE JUST AN ADDED SIDE LINE
THE WAVES ON THE WAY BACK COULD NOT DENY US OUR FUN
WITH THE STRAINS OF GYPSY MUSIC SOUNDING JUST FINE

THEN SOON SYDNEY APPEARED JUST ON SUNRISE
THE TRIP ALMOST OVER, A LITTLE SADNESS WOULD BRIEFLY CROSS THE MIND
BUT THE GOOD MEMORIES WOULD STAY MUCH LONGER
SOME PRINTED FOR YOU AT THIRTY NINE DOLLARS NINTEY NINE!

THE RIDE BACK TO OUR HOUSES WAS SILENT COMPARED TO THE JOURNEYS
OF DAYS AGO
EXPERIENCES WOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN OR THE TIMES SO ENJOYED, FADE
AWAY.
WE TRAVELLERS WILL STOP AND GRIN AT A MEMORY PASSING BY
THEN CONTINUE ON OUR WAY, HANGING ON, AS THE BODY STILL WANTS TO
SWAY.

Jimmy Brook

[Port Chalmers, Tairei and Akoroa are towns in New Zealand.]

A BUSH MORNING

The time between worlds of dark and light is gone but in an instant
It is the natural division of old and new ever repeating
The sapphires that hang in the sky know they will fade
Their part done in nights and days inevitable meeting.

The first faint splashes of eastern sky start to show pink
And a nocturnal world no longer reigns in shadowy solitude
The early feathered chords quickly erupt to chase the last stars away
And a picaninny dawn announces this morning's mood.

Shafts of sunlight begin parting the early mist
And shadowy shapes evolve into gums of ancient years
A furtive wallaby moves between the ferns in a cautious motion
Sampling the grass shoots and testing the air to allay its fears.

Too early for cold blooded life forms to yet show their face
A hurrying possum moves quickly to its daylight hole
The earthy smell of a new day is upon the freshened air
And magpies swoop and feed and then to the world air their soul.

The light mist that hung above the eerie and mysterious swamp
Is now but all lifted and a warmth invades the flats and creek beds
Giving a new day its majesty and Right to Rule
An endless cycle of renewing upon the land now quietly treads.

White cockatoos screech from limb to limb
And encourage white spidery flannel flowers to open to the new light
Purple bush irises rise up to meet the sun
And a hopping mouse knows that shelter is now to avoid a deadly bite.

With the speed of a winters storm approach
The day is already warm with purpose and believing
That constant cycle of a new time is all around the earth
Soon to be absorbed itself by the day and then the coolness of evening

But none would have it any other way or in any other form
Millennia has set the pattern that life is attached to sunlight's rays
Colours of every hue abound even if not discerned by all
And a bush morning gives life for the ever returning days.

Jimmy Brook

CHARLIE THE HANDY MAN

Charlie was an odd one, he just turned up one week
Short of money and long on stubble, and willing to earn his keep
The boss eyed him over and would have sent him on his way
But a good lunch and a better wool price had decided to let him stay

Charlie was slow, with each job eyed over with a long stare
Every project was pondered and measured taking great care
The sheds were swept and the glass fixed, in windows broken
Weeds were removed and sadly many vegetables also went to heaven

The fallen leaves were gathered in piles and soon scattered by breezes so quick
The boss's missus just smiled and gave her hubby a feminine wink
Smokos were many and taken at any time around the corner
The reality of any serious progress was becoming most annoying to the owner

As weeks rolled on, Charlie's expertise was sorely tested
The boss was losing patience and his dislike of Charlie, festered
When propping up a shaky hen house with wire and wooden pegs
There was a creak a groan and behold, flat chooks and flatter eggs

Waving a cane and shouting unpleasant things about Charlie's fate
He chased the disgraced handyman around the front yard and out the gate
Seeing the last of that rascal was a focus in the boss's mind
But fate looked for a plan, and one it did find

The years rolled on and the manager's working life was now spent
So retired to a nice place in town where he was well off and content
One clear and quiet day, the manager's wife answered a knock at the door
An itinerant and shabby person she knew, looking hungry and poor

She had a soft streak and offered him a small job
Fixing the letter box and painting it for a few bob
An hour later Charlie knocked again and she smiled with a tear
And said he could do some more painting around in the rear

The porch and foundations around there sorely needed a coat
And he would find the implements nearby with a tin of creosote
As shadows were lengthening, Charlie appeared at the front door
"Finished" he uttered and she passed him a tenner, then a little more

The spouse just hovered behind, wishing the man would fly
And the diminishing rear view was a delight to his good eye
Then Charlie yelled that even he could see it was no porch
"It was a Volvo and I don't even need a torch."

Jimmy Brook

[Chooks are egg laying chickens]

THE MAN BEHIND THE BLADE

He joined the fight to save a nation
And soon was flying across mountains and deep blue sea
From the wide brown land smelling of eucalyptus
To a tropical place with strange fruits hanging from the tree

At first it was just with metal banjos that they started levelling the land
Then later he had his big machine with noises that went clunk click
Together they moved mountains and filled the slimy swamps
Laying Marston mats so planes could refuel and not sink
The planes they came in numbers small but always returned up to the skies

Refuelled by willing hands to stem the enemy tide
Often the bombs would wreck their busy work
But it didn't stop them, they were on the winning side

It was a thankless task these dedicated men performed
Each day was full of challenges and sweat and heat
That big bulldozer never rested in its toil
Even though he and his mates looked weary and beat

There was no time for a rest, a nation was waiting in hope
A beer or just a quick swim to break that gruelling day
If it wasn't bombs or bullets there was that dreaded mozzie
To take its toll on young men's health whatever may

That monster machine was his friend despite the noise and smell
Clearing air strips from dense and impenetrable jungle green
Just so they could stem the tide of fear and menace
Day in and day out, combating an enemy that was rarely ever seen

But they were winning if ever so slow and costly
He knew the end would come some lucky day in time
His family at home he needed to hold and cry with
Even a son he had never ever seen, these visions were so prime

Dodging enemy bullets from a plane would soon bring this closer
A shattered palm tree took one life and nearly claimed his nuggetty frame
It was a vision of a wife and two children that kept his spirit going
Through swirling mists and uncertainty, his body was not to be nature's claim

His vision was fulfilled but it took many torturous months of doubt
Often dreaming of that big machine with its steel blade so strong
He sits with arms cradling his loves so precious and dear
And smiles when he hears that diesel roar in his mind like a song

The gift he gave his eldest has pride and place in all their lives
A little yellow toy bulldozer for sons and wife that would never fade
They were times of anguish and yet of pride and achievement
He was proud that he was the man behind the blade.

Jimmy Brook

[Metal banjos are spades and shovels. The man was my father]

MY FEATHERED FRIEND

This piece of my life is probably something new
It's about that time that was awkward and never told
Winning it in a chook raffle should have been my clue
But I'll just leave the philosophy and let it unfold

Assurances it was an ostrich egg are well and fine
Particularly as I was light headed, and singing carol after carol
I put it in the laundry hamper, its shell seemed so fine
And forgot it for a week until I needed some apparel

My motherly instinct jumped in and warmth was my appraisal
The microwave was what caught my loving eye
No settings for emu or ostrich appeared on the label
So lamb casserole for 15 seemed worth a try

I had a girl friend who ironed my undies, why I'll be damned
I was in the midst of such a job on my nice clothes
When such a large explosion shook the iron from my hand
And then pain as the appliance came down and hit my bare toes

I took a cautious look whilst the smoke filled the kitchen
One could see bits of my oven everywhere
Where once was my egg now stood a big chicken
It was squawking and flapping its singed and blackened derriere

I realised that casserole was too long, and that rang alarms
But no time for other quaint musings that came to mind
The newly hatched jumped out and into my arms
Motherly instinct came again, it was a marriage of bird and mankind

However something nagged in my brain in a few weeks or so
I should have taken action and some measures

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