



UNCONVENTIONAL MEANS

THE DREAM DOWN UNDER
ANNE RICHARDSON WILLIAMS
WITH ABORIGINAL TRADITIONAL STORIES
AS TOLD BY LORRAINE MAFI-WILLIAMS

Illustrations by Anne Richardson Williams

This Pearlson Press edition contains new text & additional illustrations, an ending updated from the 2000 In Circle Press first edition, and a glossary.

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Sixteen-year-old Anne Williams, shattered by a family tragedy, tries to cope through art and reading. She eventually finds solace in Nevil Shute's novel *A Town Like Alice*. His heroine's passage through the tribulations of war to find love and a new home modeled after the town of Alice Springs, Australia gives teenage Anne hope that "there is something on the other side of the terrible things for her, too. Some day, she promises herself, she will go to Australia and to Alice Springs.

Decades later, Anne's call to Australia deepens. Now an artist and successful businesswoman, she is reading a book about the continent's Aboriginal people when a photograph of Aboriginal elder Lorraine Mafi-Williams mesmerizes her. She feels an immediate kin-

ship, even though others find it ridiculous that this upper-middle-class Southern white woman and an Aboriginal elder could share more than a common last name.

When Anne finally sets out for Australia, she adds to her desire to see Alice Springs the dream of also meeting Lorraine. But with no address, no phone number, no conventional way to get in touch with an Aboriginal woman, Anne must rely on unconventional means—dreams, visions, meditation and intuition—to guide her halfway across the world to find the woman whose ancient stories of a land and its people will help heal her.

"Anne Williams has written an intelligent, lyrical and inspirational tale about her excursion into the outbacks of Australia and of her soul. The true story of her pilgrimage is beautifully and directly told, creating a literary roadmap of trust that readers might learn how one soul navigated unconventional—but vital—pathways forward."

Steven McFadden
author, *Legend of the Rainbow Warriors*

*"...a unique and moving work
...a singularly unforgettable read."*
Midwest Book Review

"She has entered the magical universe and is giving us a report of what it looks like and how to navigate in that terrain... These stories are stories of initiation and transformation, used to hold people together and teach them who they are... a travel adventure in the life of the mind."

Michael White
editor of *Safe in Heaven Dead: INterviews with Jack Kerouac*
& *Light of the Three Jewels* by Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche

UNCONVENTIONAL MEANS is also available in Adobe PDF ebook format from www.pearlson.com and online booksellers. The \$18.95 ebook contains the full text & interior design of the paperback edition, with the inclusion of color versions of Anne Richardson Williams's artwork and a bonus section of color snapshots related to her journey.



Excerpts from UNCONVENTIONAL MEANS

November 2, 1995

A FRIEND INVITED A GROUP OF US TO MEET A fortune teller, a man who reads lightning-struck cedar sticks to tell the future. His gift comes from a native American grandmother.

The sticks say that right before my fiftieth birthday I will cross a lot of water, a sea, perhaps, to meet a woman, and when I return, everything in my life will change.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anne Richardson Williams graduated in 1969 from Vanderbilt University/Peabody College with a BFA in printmaking and painting. While owning and running a conservation framers/art gallery in Nashville, Tennessee, she continued to experiment and work with many different painting and drawing media.

Watercolor is her painting medium of choice, because—to paraphrase J.S. Sargent—she loves the thrill of creating art in an emergency situation. She also enjoys (and teaches) Book Arts, that is, using the book as an art form and as a medium for combining interests in expressing through both visual art and the written word.

Anne's love of writing began with a college creative writing course she took by coincidence to fulfill a graduation requirement. During this class she first dreamed of writing stories and illustrating her writing. Her love of storytelling has been nurtured through the pleasure of years of reading aloud to her son and also of learning and appreciating the cultural stories of many different aboriginal oral traditions.

Unconventional Means is for Anne literally a dream come true, an opportunity in her own life to experience "...the movement from dream to action that creates the world."

January 30, 1997

LAST NIGHT I DREAMED THAT I CHANGED MY name to Goanna.

The *Aboriginal Mythology* book tells me this morning that Goanna is an Australian lizard with connections to the dreamtime and to the legends of the Rainbow Serpent.

I put my hand on the big map on the wall and could feel my journey beginning to form itself, moving up from Adelaide in the south to Uluru, following the Goanna stories across the Australian landscape, then turning eastward to the Goanna Headland, which is in the Bundjalung traditional lands.

February 28, 1997

MAYBE I AM HERE TO DREAM.

Last night, I dreamed that I walked into a room that was empty except for a dark-skinned man who closed the door behind me.

"Am I the only one who is coming in?" I asked, and he said, "You are the only one who wants to."

It was dark. It was the Dreamtime. I was part of the Dreamtime.

Standing behind me, the man began to remove my skin, starting at my feet and pulling it up in one piece, like something I was wearing. When I looked, I was still "dressed" to the waist. From the waist down, I was a skeleton.

This morning, I slipped on some algae left by high tide, smashing my knee and hitting my head on a rock. Funny thing, I saw the slime and stepped on it anyway.

Sitting there rubbing my forehead and wiping the blood off my leg, I remembered a line from Carol Anthony's *A Guide to the I Ching*—"Unpleasant events serve to jar our minds, telling us that we are on the wrong path."

This isn't the adventure I was looking for. I hobbled back to the motel to book a flight, and tomorrow I leave for Brisbane and Bundjalung country.

